comparative literature

published by the

UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

EUGENE, OREGON

With the Cooperation
of the Comparative Literature Section
of the Modern Language
Association of America

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Issued quarterly. Entered as second-class matter, April 5, 1949, at the post office at Eugene, Oregon, under act of August 24, 1912.
The subscription rate is $3.50 a year. The price of single copies is $1.00.
Manuscripts, editorial communications, and books for review should be addressed to: Comparative Literature, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon.
Correspondence concerning subscriptions should be addressed to: University of Oregon Publications, Eugene, Oregon. Correspondence concerning exchanges should be addressed to: University of Oregon Library, Eugene, Oregon.

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volume xi
summer 1959
number 3

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Milman Parry and Homeric Artistry

MY PURPOSE in these remarks is chiefly to illustrate (in a highly selective way) what is I think the true belief that one result of Milman Parry's work on the Homeric style[1] has been to remove from the literary study of the Homeric poems an entire area of normal literary criticism. But first I want to indicate very briefly how the reception of his work has already produced one worry—a worry which, rather oddly, bothers Parry's fellow Unitarians.[2]

[1] A cursory account of the relevant parts of Parry's work may make some sections of what follows a little clearer to the reader not familiar with recent Homeric scholarship. In a short series of publications, beginning with his doctoral dissertation *L'Épithète traditionnelle dans Homère* (Paris, 1928), Parry argued, with a far more elaborate documentation than had ever been attempted before, that Homer was what is now called an "oral" poet—that is, a poet who composed his poems without the use of writing and who presented them orally and often more or less extemporaneously to his audience. The stylistic feature of this poetry which will here concern us is its use of formulas. Parry presented masses of material to show that Homer composed his poems to a great extent with "prefabricated units," groups of words cunningly designed to occupy just so much space in a line of hexameter verse. It is clear that the poet had at his disposal a tremendous array of these convenient word groups or formulas. An important conclusion Parry drew from his materials was that the oral poet tends to use his formulas primarily because they are convenient and not because their meaning is especially appropriate in a given passage. I shall be much occupied here with what is, I suppose, the commonest single type of formula, that consisting of a noun and an adjective. One fact which seems to have emerged from Parry's studies is that Homer's adjectives are apparently used generically rather than with a particularizing effect; they seem designed to bring out a quality which the noun has regularly, rather than to call our attention to a quality in a particular instance of that noun. When Homer refers, for instance, to ships and to horses as "swift" or "swift-footed," he apparently means not that the particular ship or horse we are now reading about was an especially fast one, but that ships and horses in general move swiftly.

[2] I use "Unitarians" here to mean, of course, those who accept the unity of the

It might be regarded as symbolic of the degree to which in Homeric studies every man's hand is raised against his brother and one never knows from what corner the next dead cat will come that, although Parry was himself a Unitarian (and, some would feel, a Unitarian of a very conservative sort), his work has now and then received high praise from Analysts, while some Unitarians have shown a tendency to belittle, to denigrate, or at least to regret it. It is doubtful if one could find anywhere any statement about Parry more unreservedly complimentary than this: "... Milman Parry, whose premature death extinguished the brightest light that has been shed on the Greek Epic in our time." And these words are from *The Homeric Odyssey* of Denys Page,[3] a work which contains a great deal calculated to make the really conservative Unitarian writhe in righteous wrath. I do not mean, of course, that all Analysts have praised Parry. A number of Analysts on the continent have insulted him by ignoring his work completely and writing as though it did not exist—and for many of them it quite probably does not. And elsewhere some of the linguists have now and then derided Parry for what seems to them his inexpert command of that "Grammar and etymologie of words" which to the linguists is alone worthy of the name knowledge.

Among the Unitarians, on the other hand, while it is true that many have been ready to welcome and to praise Parry's achievement, a number seem to have been made uncomfortable by his publications. In particular, his conviction that Homer's vocabulary of formulas was far too extensive and complex to be the creation of any one man and must therefore be largely an inheritance from a long line of predecessors is regarded by some Unitarians with the greatest suspicion, as threatening to their conception of poetic greatness and their conviction that Homer is pre-eminently a great poet. Parry's account of the traditional formulary nature of Homer's language has seemed to this group of Unitarians to involve a dastardly aspersion on Homer's inventive power, that feature of Homer's genius which they find on almost every page of his poems and to which they attach supreme importance. This attitude towards Parry has, I think, been best described by Theodore Wade-Gery: "The most important assault made on Homer's creativeness in recent years is the work of Milman Parry, who may be called the Darwin of Homeric studies. As Darwin seemed to many to have removed the finger of God from the creation of the world and of man, so Milman

Homeric poems in contrast to the "Analysts," who concern themselves with analyzing the poems into their presumably once independent parts.

[3] Oxford, 1955, p. 139.

Parry has seemed to some to remove the creative poet from the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*."[4]

This analogy between Parry and Darwin illustrates perfectly how, just as many a serious-minded Victorian must have felt that life would have been ever so much more comfortable if only Darwin had confined himself exclusively to the study of barnacles, so these Unitarians who put so high a value on what they call originality would have been so much more comfortable if only Parry had limited his interests to Lycophron or the Second Sophistic.

Among these worried Homerists, the one who was made most uncomfortable by Parry's work was probably the late S. E. Bassett. At least, Bassett went farther than others in outspoken criticism of Parry. In his Sather Lectures, for instance, although Bassett spoke highly of Parry's work, he also felt that Parry's "chief thesis awakens the gravest doubt," and found aspects of his theories "largely negative," "not logical or convincing," "still less reasonable," "denied by indisputable evidence of the function and power of the memory," and so on.[5] Bassett was also somewhat inclined to belittle the importance of Parry's discoveries by suggesting that they were not, after all, so original as Parry and his admirers seemed to believe.[6] Here, also, there is a close parallel to the reception given to Darwin's work about a century ago.

In the decades that have passed since the deaths of Bassett and Parry, the proportion of Homerists who regard Parry's work as important and sound has probably increased, and Bassett's attitude seldom finds expression today even among those very numerous Homerists who share his general belief in Homer's great originality. It would seem that even these Homerists feel that, although some features of Parry's work are somewhat unwelcome, they must be at least tentatively accepted along with strontium 90 and a number of other unpleasant features of modern life.

I have given some indication elsewhere[7] why I believe that these Unitarians who place so high a value on Homer's "originality" have been following a path which has so far proved profitless and which may prove dangerous both to Unitarianism and to Homer; but even for one who does not share the worries of Bassett and his school about Parry's destruction of the great creative genius, there is, it seems to me, one result of Parry's work which *is* most regrettable and which deserves some consideration and emphasis, particularly since so much writing on

[4] H. T. Wade-Gery, *The Poet of the Iliad* (Cambridge, 1952), pp. 38-39.
[5] *The Poetry of Homer* (Berkeley, 1938), pp. 15-17.
[6] Page 247, note 8.
[7] *AJP*, LXXI (1950), 337-364.

Homer seems so often to disregard it. Bassett and those who agree with him have at best, I think, greatly exaggerated the seriousness of Parry's assault on Homer's "creativeness," and in worrying about the loss of Homer the inventor they have been worrying about the wrong subject.

The regrettable feature of Parry's work, as I see it, is not that Parry has taken the great creative poet out of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*, but that he has taken from Homeric critics a considerable body of phenomena which literary critics normally consider a legitimate and significant part of their proper study. If Parry's conclusions are sound, it it now hard, or impossible, to find artistry in many places in the Homeric poems where critics of the pre-Parry age found beauty and where contemporary critics often still find it. Moreover, this subject now has an interest and an importance extending far beyond the field of Homeric studies, since scholars have begun to apply Parry's theories to other poetry—Magoun's essay on the use of the formulary style in the *Beowulf* is a conspicuous example.[8]

If we accept Parry's view about the traditional formulary nature of the Homeric style, his contention that the oral poet chooses a phrase primarily because it is convenient, not because of any delicate nuance in its meaning (and I should say that in the present state of our knowledge of oral poetry we ought to accept this), then we must, in dealing with Homer, renounce a large area of normal literary criticism, and a vast and varied collection of earlier and contemporary criticism and "appreciations" of Homeric poetry must be thrown overboard.

In the most general sense, the side of Parry's work I am here concerned with is its effect on the criticism of the minutiae, the details, of Homeric style. These constitute an aspect of literature, and especially of poetry, which has always attracted the attention of critics. The situation in which the critic of Homer's poetry now finds himself is most obvious when he undertakes to deal with Homer's great and multifarious assembly of expressions consisting of a noun plus an adjective, and most of the material I shall be occupied with here will be of this sort. Conscious, as critics have always been, that in post-Homeric literature adjectives used by great poets usually mean something and can often be shown to be beautifully apt, critics have naturally tried to deal with Homeric poetry in the same way. And, although in the post-Parry age criticism of this sort is no longer so simple, it is still going on and manifests itself in a number of ways. It will appear as we proceed that some of these ways are to try to find a peculiar appropriateness in the

[8] F. P. Magoun, Jr., "Oral-Formulaic Character of Anglo-Saxon Narrative Poetry," *Speculum*, XXVIII (1953), 446-467.

use of an adjective in a particular passage; or to argue that there is a class of adjective plus noun formulas in which the adjective rather than the noun is the important word; or to argue that in certain instances of an adjective-noun formula the adjective does not have its normal and expected meaning.

The classic example of the kind of Homeric criticism which Parry has made impossible is, I suppose, the comment made by John Ruskin in the twelfth chapter of the third volume of *Modern Painters*, "Of the Pathetic Fallacy." Ruskin quotes the passage in the third book of the *Iliad* in which Helen's statement that she cannot see her two brothers in the army is followed by this comment by Homer:

> ὣς φάτο, τοὺς δ'ἤδη κάτεχεν φυσίζοος αἶα
> ἐν Λακεδαίμονι αὖθι, φίλῃ ἐν πατρίδι γαίῃ.
> (Lines 243-244)

Ruskin translates these lines thus: "So she spoke. But them, already, the life-giving earth possessed, there in Lacedaemon, in the dear fatherland." He then bids us,

> Note, here, the high poetical truth carried to the extreme. The poet has to speak of the earth in sadness, but he will not let that sadness affect or change his thoughts of it. No; though Castor and Pollux be dead, yet the earth is our mother still, fruitful, life-giving. These are the facts of the thing. I see nothing else than these. Make what you will of them.

Ruskin's editors add the further information that "In the MS. Ruskin notes, 'the insurpassably tender irony in the epithet—"life-giving earth" of the grave . . .' "[9]

I am not here concerned with the soundness of Ruskin's reading of this passage or with the extent to which Arnold's criticism of Ruskin[10] is justifiable. Nor am I concerned with the linguistic question of whether the second element in the epithet which Ruskin found so tenderly ironic is connected with the word meaning "life."[11] My point is simply that, if φυσίζοος αἶα is a formulary phrase and if Parry is correct in his analysis of the poet's technique in the use of formulas, then we can no longer with any confidence urge that the adjective φυσίζοος was deliberately chosen by the poet because of any kind of peculiar appro-

[9] *The Works of John Ruskin*, edited by E. T. Cook and A. Wedderburn, V (London, 1904), 213.

[10] Matthew Arnold, *On Translating Homer* (London, New Universal Library, n.d.), pp. 8-9.

[11] The opinion now apparently prevailing connects the second element in the adjective with a grain, *Triticum monococcum*, and not with life, so that the word means strictly "grain producing" and not "life producing"; but for poetical purposes either meaning would seem to arrive at much the same result.

priateness of meaning. *Φυσίζοος αἶα* may be just a way of saying *αἶα* under certain metrical conditions. And so of a thousand other splendid Homeric phrases.

Interpretations such as Ruskin's have now after Parry's publications lost any plausibility they may once have had, because they require us to believe, not only that the formulary poet used his formulas every now and then in a nonformulary way, but also that his audience, thoroughly trained in the technique of listening to formulary verse, could be expected to know when an epithet was formulary and when it was not. The second of these beliefs, like the first, is admittedly possible, though I suspect that they are both in fact wrong. But, right or wrong, neither of them helps the modern reader of Homer. Parry has shown us a great deal about the mechanics of formulas, but neither he nor anyone else can put *us* into a position where we can have the kind of attitude and response to formulas which the poet and his original audience had automatically.

And yet critics are so desirous to find in Homer what they find in other great poets that, even with full awareness of Parry's work and a willingness to accept its general soundness, they continue to assure us that this or that example or group of examples is different from the rest and shows real artistry. In dealing with their pet passages or phrases critics often still write as though Parry had not lived at all. Ruskin's interpretation of *φυσίζοος αἶα* is, both itself and as a type, still with us, as we may see by looking at some remarks of C. M. Bowra. A special interest might be expected to attach to Bowra's words, partly because of his distinguished place among Homerists and partly because he happens to have discussed Homeric epithets briefly just before the Parry era in his *Tradition and Design in the Iliad*[12] and then again some two decades later in his *Heroic Poetry*.[13] The surprising fact which emerges from comparing the two discussions, however, is that Parry's work can hardly be said to have made much, if any, difference in Bowra's views about these matters. In the earlier book (p. 84) he shares Ruskin's belief that there is conscious artistry in the "life-giving earth" which is the tomb of Helen's brothers: "... the effect is pure pathos. The earth, which gives birth, is still a grave. The thought is simple and ancient and perfectly just. No doubt Homer had it in mind when he wrote these lines." In *Heroic Poetry*, and on a page which mentions Parry in a footnote (p. 240), he tells us:

[12] Oxford, 1930. Parry's *L'Épithète traditionnelle dans Homère* was published at Paris in 1928, but Bowra gives no indication in this book of being aware of Parry's work.

[13] London, 1952.

When Homer says that the "life-giving" earth covers Helen's brothers in death, he marks the ironical contrast in the nature of the earth which both feeds and buries us. This is a delicate art which Homer usually manages with skill. Of course it might be argued that such epithets are so otiose that nobody takes much notice of them. This is no doubt true in many cases, but none the less it is a finer art to make a conscious use of such formulae than to treat them as if they had no function.

In *Tradition and Design* Bowra found a very pleasant bit of artistry and a somewhat different kind of irony in the fourth book of the *Iliad* (p. 83):

Athene addresses him [viz., Pandarus] conventionally as Λυκάονος υἱὲ δαίφρον... [wise-hearted son of Lycaon], and we do not wonder at it, though Pandarus is not a very heroic figure. But the point of the epithet comes later. Athene persuades Pandarus to break the truce and shoot an arrow at the Achaeans, and then we see why the poet has called him δαίφρον. For his comment is:

ὣς φάτ' Ἀθηναίη, τῷ δὲ φρένας ἄφρονι πεῖθεν. (Δ 104)

[So spoke Athena, and persuaded the fool's heart.] The epithet was needed to lead up to this comment by contrast, and shows how Homer can, if he chooses, subordinate this ancient usage [viz., the "ornamental" epithet] to his own purposes.

But here again, I should say, if we take Parry's work seriously we are bound to lose our confidence in these often interesting and always complimentary claims that in this or that passage Homer's formulas have a meaning quite different from the ordinary one and hence a quite different function.

In this same paragraph with his discussion of Pandarus Bowra notes two or three examples of what appears to be the poet's artistry in choosing the appropriate word from a pair or triplet of metrically equivalent epithets. This is an aspect of the problem which might repay thorough study.[14] But it is possible, I am afraid, that investigation might show merely that the data are inadequate for any significant conclusions. Bowra's examples, like his account of the artistry in the treatment of Pandarus, are all from Paul Cauer's *Grundfragen der Homerkritik*,[15] and Cauer himself owed most of his instances to Karl Franke's Greifswald dissertation of 1887, *De nominum propriorum epithetis Homericis*. This repeated use of a few secondhand examples may only represent economy of effort, but possibly it reflects a paucity of materials.[16]

[14] I am indebted to Professor T. G. Rosenmeyer for pointing this out to me when a version of these remarks was read at a meeting of the Classical Association of the Pacific States at the University of British Columbia in Apr. 1958.

[15] Third ed. (Leipzig, 1923), pp. 449-450.

[16] Bowra dealt with this topic briefly again in his Andrew Lang Lecture of

The most elaborate attempt to combine a general acceptance of Parry's view of the formulary nature of the Homeric style with a belief in the artistry of a particular formulary phrase is G. M. Calhoun's treatment of winged words.[17] Calhoun had become convinced that Homer's characters speak winged words only when they are under the influence of some strong emotion; and in his analysis of the passages containing winged words he tried to demonstrate the various kinds and degrees of emotion involved. Calhoun was a great admirer of Parry's work and convinced of its importance and soundness. But when he became interested in winged words he found Parry in the way and had to discover a means of evading the difficulty. His belief that winged words are spoken only under certain conditions meant, of course, that winged words are a special kind of words and that the adjective is significant. He therefore argued that, while the adjective "looks exactly like a purely ornamental epithet, the instances we have examined admit of no alternative to the conclusion that the word is here definitely particularized." Calhoun's way of reconciling his theory with his general acceptance of Parry's case for the formulary Homeric style was to suggest that there are two kinds of noun-adjective formulas in Homer: first, those in which the noun "determines the use of the formula" and in which the adjective is ornamental; secondly, phrases like winged words in which "the adjective determines the choice of formula," and in which the adjective does not lose its meaning. Phrases of this second group look just like the normal type, but the fact that in them the adjective is meaningful makes them generically different.

But this, ingenious as it is, will, I am afraid, not do. Even if Calhoun was right in making such a distinction, this does not help us any unless someone finds a way of clearly distinguishing the unusual class from the usual and normal one. Calhoun, of course, followed the only possible method in trying to do this: having formed the preliminary notion that in a particular frequently used formula the adjective seems meaningful, examine the instances with great care to see if the adjective can be shown to be in fact meaningful in that formula.

But Calhoun's case for his position was vigorously rebutted by Parry himself,[18] who showed, first, that the verses with winged words "are used to bring in speech when the character who is to speak has been the

1955, *Homer and his Forerunners* (Edinburgh, 1955), pp. 11 ff. He adds one or two new instances, but remarks, "these cases are so rare that nothing can be deduced from them."

[17] "The Art of Formula in Homer—ΕΠΕΑ ΠΤΕΡΟΕΝΤΑ," CPh, XXX (1935), 215-227.

[18] "About Winged Words," *CPh*, XXXII (1937), 59-63.

subject of the last verses, so that the use of his name would be clumsy," and, secondly, that Homer has no "other whole verse without πτερόεντα in it whereby he could say, 'and he said'." This means, as Parry pointed out, that the advocate of Calhoun's theory must argue "both that Homer never wanted to say in just one verse 'and he said' and also that when he wants to use πτερόεντα, he plans the syntax ahead in such a way as not to have to give the name of the speaker when he introduces the speech." Many will, I should think, agree with Parry that this sort of composition is foreign to the nature of oral poetry. There seems to have been no general acceptance of Calhoun's case for the emotional content of winged words and there have been no further efforts to use his methods to demonstrate the validity of his potentially more important idea about the two classes of noun-adjective formulas. And, until this is done, we have no way of distinguishing the formulas with the meaningful adjectives from those with the purely ornamental ones, and we are free to suspect that the class with the meaningful adjectives does not in fact exist at all. If, without a criterion to distinguish two classes, we try to follow Calhoun in urging that in some formulas the adjectives are meaningful, we are likely to become purely subjective and, in effect, abandon Parry's whole theory of the formulary nature of Homer's style.

One great point of superiority which an approach like Calhoun's has when compared with most of the "aesthetic" criticism of Homer's formulas is that Calhoun tried to show that his formula was always used in the same way and therefore with the same meaning. While critics in general seemingly assume that all the noun-adjective formulas are basically alike, but that a given formula may be used in different ways, Calhoun argued that there were two different types of formulas, but apparently believed that a given formula is always used in the same way.[19] If in these days of scientific formulas we try to represent in formulaic fashion the two attitudes, we might say that the view of critics like Bowra is that, if a given noun-adjective (*na*) formula *X* occurs in Homer six times, five times *na*=*n* (that is, the adjective is ornamental and meaningless), but that in the sixth instance *na*=*nA* (that is, the adjective is deliberately used for a special artistic effect and is the important word in the phrase). For Calhoun there were two classes of formulas, *X* and *Y*. A given formula of type *X* occurs, say, six times, and in these instances *na*=*n* always. A given formula of type *Y* occurs, say, six times, and in these instances *na*=*nA* always. This conception of Homer's method seems to me in itself far more plausible than that

[19] Unfortunately, Calhoun did not explore and develop this idea about the two kinds of formulas, but just stated it briefly in a footnote at the end of his paper on winged words.

a given formula should regularly be used with no special force in the adjective, but that once or twice the same phrase may be used with peculiar stress on the meaning of the adjective. In the present state of our knowledge, however, both methods of extracting artistry from Homer's noun-adjective formulas appear to be unreliable, to say the least.

The examples of Homeric artistry we have so far considered are alike in that they show critics' efforts to find a peculiar appropriateness in the meaning of the adjective in a noun-adjective formula in a particular instance or in all the instances of a particular formula. But in all these examples the adjective in a given formula is thought to have the same meaning, and the poet's artistry lies in the special appropriateness of that meaning in the context. Somewhat different are those passages in which critics have given a formula a specially fitting nuance by modifying the meaning of the adjective somewhat to suit an unusual case. An example of this is the phrase *γναμπτοῖσι μέλεσσι*, used half a dozen times in Homer. In three of these, *Iliad*, XI, 669, *Od.*, XI, 394 and XXI, 283, there is a contrast between the kind of strength a person has now and that which he used to have *ἐνὶ γναμπτοῖσι μέλεσσι*. Two of the remaining three, *Od.*, XIII, 398 and 430, occur in the description of how Athena disguised Odysseus: we are first told that she said she would dry up the skin on Odysseus' *γναμπτοῖσι μέλεσσι* and then that she did so. There seems to be pretty general agreement nowadays that the adjective in these passages is complimentary: Cunliffe gives as definitions "flexible, lissom"; Liddell and Scott tell us that the adjective in this phrase means "supple, pliant," and distinguishes "the limbs of living men from the stark and stiff ones of the dead."[20] Murray translates the word in all five passages "supple." So far there seems to be no trouble.

But in the sixth instance the phrase is applied to the aged Priam, so frightened by the sudden appearance of Hermes at the ford when the king and Idaeus are on their way to ransom Hector's body that the hair stands upright on Priam's *γναμπτοῖσι μέλεσσι* (*Iliad*, XXIV, 359). Now probably the most consistently emphasized quality assigned to Priam in the *Iliad* is his old age. There has, therefore, been a natural tendency to boggle at the idea that the hair stood upright on the lissom limbs of this decrepit old man. Commentators, therefore, have long been ready to believe that in this passage the adjective does not have its usual complimentary meaning, here seemingly so inappropriate, but a slightly different and pejorative meaning beautifully suited to the context. Here,

[20] This idea is at least as old as Eustathius. See his note on *Iliad*, XI, 669 (*Eustathii . . . commentarii ad Homeri Iliadem*, III, Leipzig, 1829, 74).

we are told, the phrase does not mean "lissom limbs" but "limbs bent with old age."[21]

But the possibility of this kind of subtle difference in the use of this and other formulas is, I should say, ruled out by Parry's studies. Whether the phrase was meant to be pejorative or complimentary, Parry's theories seem to require us to recognize that the formula refers to some constant quality in limbs, whether of all men or of all old men.

As a matter of fact, it is quite probable that the phrase was not intended to be either complimentary or the reverse, but merely indicated that limbs are so constructed that they bend. This kind of fact is not one we should think worth mentioning; so we tend to translate "lissom" or "bent" and not just "bendable" or "capable of being flexed"—actually we do not even seem to have in English a completely neutral literary word for describing this phenomenon. As J. Berlage showed,[22] there are a number of these "neutral" epithets in Homer which merely mark some facet of a phenomenon without expressing approval or disapproval.

So far we have been concerned with what may be called the serious side of Homeric artistry. But Parry's work has also done serious damage to the criticism of Homeric humor, since critics have often believed that part of Homer's humor is somehow connected with his style. In exploring briefly this topic, although I shall begin with noun-adjective formulas, I shall include illustrations of one or two other sorts.

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[21] This interpretation of the phrase is sometimes assigned to Doederlein, but it is considerably older. Doederlein did maintain that γναμπτοῖσι μέλεσσι meant "limbs bent with age"; but he was not responsible for the idea that there was special artistry in this passage, because he argued that the phrase always meant "limbs bent with age," *curvatis membris*, and compared it to Tacitus' *curvata senio membra* (*Ann.*, I, 34) (L. Doederlein, *Homerisches Glossarium*, III, Erlangen, 1858, 9). Nearly a century before Doederlein, J. A. Ernesti had said that the adjective in this passage about Priam did not mean "*flexibilibus*, sed: *incurvo in corpore*, scil. senis grandaevi." (Ernesti's edition, published 1759-64, is not readily available to me. I take this from Heyne.) And in 1802 Heyne (*Homeri Carmina*, ed. C. G. Heyne, VIII, Leipzig and London, 1802, 670) argued that this was the correct interpretation of the phrase as applied to Priam and possibly in *Iliad* XI, 669, and *Od.*, XXI, 283, but that in the other three instances the adjective was merely ornamental. Among the Homerists since Heyne who have fancied that the limbs of Priam are bent differently from those of other Homeric heroes with bent limbs may be mentioned the Greek editor G. Mistriotes (ΟΜΗΡΟΥ ΙΛΙΑΣ, III, Athens, 1887, 459) and the French translator P. Mazon, who tells us that Nestor's limbs in *Iliad*, XI, 669 are "membres souples," while Priam's in XXIV, 359 are "membres tordus" (*Homère, Iliade*, 4 vols., Paris 1947). Leaf mentions the meaning "bent with age" as one of two possibilities without committing himself (*The Iliad*, ed. by W. Leaf, 2nd ed., II, London, 1902, 562).

[22] "De vocibus τυκτός, τετυγμένος, ποιητός, οἰκουμένη, aliis," *Mnemosyne*, LIII (1925), 289-298.

Critics have often maintained that Homer's formulary epithets are sometimes deliberately chosen for humorous effect. The most popular example, I suppose, has been the adjective applied to the mother of the beggar Irus in the *Odyssey*. From ancient times Homerists have been struck by the fact that, in introducing this lazy beggar Irus in the eighteenth book (5), Homer says that his mother called him Arnaeus and calls the mother *πότνια μήτηρ*. The adjective, elsewhere in Homer monopolized by the upper classes and seeming to mean something like "queenly," appears glaringly inappropriate.

An ancient remedy for this difficulty was to change the text,[23] and it is probably only the scantiness of our *Odyssey* scholia which has robbed us of much ancient learned speculation. Some moderns have maintained that we owe this ridiculous word to some stupid *diaskeuast* who was familiar with the phrase and used it here with no regard for its proper meaning. (The stupid *diaskeuast*, in short, acted like Parry's Homer.) But there has also been much effort to find cunning artistry in the seemingly inappropriate expression. The secret of its neatness, we are told, lies in its humor. Homer is adding to the generally merry tone of the introduction by saying, with a leer, "This lout's *regal* mother called him Arnaeus."[24] It is not surprising that this interpretation should appear in the pre-Parry age; but I think it is surprising (mirarer si in Homeri interprete quicquam mirandum esse ducerem) that, even after Parry, Homerists still feel confident that there is delightful and deliberate humor in this passage, that Mrs. Suys-Reitsma, for instance, in the very section of her book in which she is discussing Parry with approval is ready to assume that the adjective is used deliberately for comic effect.[25] Of course, for all we *know*, Homer may have meant *πότνια μήτηρ* to be a jolly misuse of a dignified formula, and his audience may have grinned with him; but, now that Parry has raised the suspicion that *πότνια μήτηρ* may be just a convenient way of saying *μήτηρ* under certain metrical conditions, there is no longer any way of being sure about such matters, and it seems to do very little good to

[23] The reading suggested, *τὸ γὰρ θέτο οἱ ποτε μήτηρ*, though it has been found plausible in modern times, is almost certainly the invention of some ancient Homerist who was as troubled by this queenly mother as many of his later heirs have been.

[24] Ameis-Hentze-Cauer (*Homers Odyssee, Gesang XIII-XVIII*, 9th ed., Leipzig and Berlin, 1928), for example, tell us in their note on the line that this is a fixed adjective for the word "mother," and is used here with the same humor as governs the rest of this scene.

[25] Just as, in the preceding sentence, she has found artistry in the formulary *χεῖρας ... ἀνδροφόνους* of *Iliad* XXIV, 478-479. S. J. Suys-Reitsma, *Het Homerisch Epos als orale Schepping van een Dichter-Hetairie* (Amsterdam, 1955), p. 20.

guess about them.[26] Here, too, we simply cannot any longer criticize the stylistic artistry of Homer as we might that of Shakespeare.

In addition to the isolated bits of humor which critics have found in phrases such as the "queenly mother" of the town loafer, some critics have maintained that Homeric humor in general is the result of the contrast between the formal language and the informal situations. E. E. Sikes in his paper on Homeric humor[27] did not concern himself with formulary style and, indeed, although writing in 1940, gave no sign that he was aware of Parry's existence; but he did urge that the poet added to the fun by composing the humorous passages in the regular epic style; and he further noted that this humorous incompatibility of style and subject was an aspect of Homer's technique which was often missed or neglected by modern translators. I fancy it was also missed by the original audience. At least, I cannot see how the poet or his audience can have felt any added humor in the use of this style for this purpose, since this was apparently the only style they knew.

In general when we deal with the relationship between style and humor in Homer we are a little like a person dealing with a language which he can read well enough but which is not his own. He is constantly missing bits of artistry and humor which are part of the native's effortless reaction, and at the same time he may often see things which are not really there. To take a somewhat frivolous example, we may imagine a foreigner reading Peacock's verses:

> The mountain sheep are sweeter,
> But the valley sheep are fatter;
> We therefore deemed it meeter
> To carry off the latter.

The foreign reader might be sufficiently at home in English to find these lines moderately amusing and yet sufficiently a foreigner to miss altogether the humor involved in the use in this context of the words "therefore" and "latter," commonly at home in serious, and especially in the most formal, prose—and he might, of course, also miss the pun involved in "meeter." On the other hand, he might find subtleties in the lines which the native does not see and which the author did not intend.

But the great four-lane highway leading to error in this humorous field is the popular old notion that the *Odyssey* every now and then indulges in deliberate parody of the *Iliad*—that it is in a modest way a kind

[26] I disregard another possible interpretation of the phrase: "But it is not impossible that his mother actually was a lady..." W. B. Stanford, *The Odyssey of Homer*, II (London, 1948), 300. This may, however, be taken as a further indication of our helplessness before the adjective.

[27] *CR*, LIV (1940), 121-127.

of prehistoric *Rape of the Lock*.[28] A leader in this kind of interpretation was the learned English editor D. B. Monro,[29] who, for example, found our old friend Irus' regal mother "mock-heroic."[30] A few lines later in the same eighteenth book of the *Odyssey*, Antinous, preparing for the fight between the beggar and Irus, says, "Whichever wins and proves the better . . . " This is identical with the expression used by Alexander in the third book of the *Iliad*, when he is suggesting the conditions for his duel with Menelaus (71). For Monro the use of the Iliadic line in these sordid new surroundings was "doubtless in the spirit of parody." Similarly in Book XIV, "the epithet of the dogs, ὑλακόμωροι (29), is a parody of the epic [*sic*] ἐγχεσίμωροι."

But perhaps the most notable example of parody yet found in the *Odyssey* is the description of Eumaeus' pigpens in Book XIV. Monro, believing this to be "almost a parody of Priam's palace," tells us that "the spirit of parody is shown by the use of the lofty epic formula where the subject is unworthy of it," and bids us "note πεντήκοντα and πλησίον ἀλλήλων."

It is true that, if one is looking for parody in the *Odyssey* and is sure that parody is a feature of that poem and if one disregards what we now know of the Homeric style and of oral poetry, it is easy to make the description of the pigpens almost farcical when we set it beside the *Iliad's* description of Priam's palace (VI, 242-250). In the palace there are within the courtyard twelve rooms built close together, and at the farmstead there are within the courtyard twelve pigpens built close together; elsewhere in the palace there are fifty rooms, and in each of the pigpens there are fifty sows; in the description of the palace there is a contrast between the arrangements for the sons and for the daughters of Priam, at the farmstead a contrast between Eumaeus' different arrangements for the sows and for the boars.

But if we are not convinced that the *Odyssey* is characterized by this love of parody, if, indeed, we suspect that the author of the *Odyssey* had not only a purpose but also a technique of composition very different from Pope's, and if we then look at the two passages and at Monro again, it will become clear at once that the parallel between the two descriptions is not particularly close and that the specific evidence cited

[28] There have also been suggestions that some parts of the *Iliad* are parodies of other parts. See, for instance, G. Finsler, *Homer*, II (2nd ed., Leipzig and Berlin, 1918), 79.

[29] *Homer's Odyssey, Books XIII-XXIV*, Oxford, 1901. Monro's comments dealing with parody are found partly in notes on individual lines and partly in the Appendix, p. 331.

[30] Monro found the ancient variant quoted in note 23 above "plausible."

by Monro is not overwhelmingly convincing. In the first place, are we really justified in saying that the first of his citations, *πεντήκοντα*, the normal word for fifty, is a "lofty epic formula"? If not, then the formulary resemblances Monro could find are reduced to the single phrase, *πλησίον ἀλλήλων*, close to one another. I should think one might fairly say that a structure for many human beings and a structure for many pigs might well in those simple days have shown certain architectural similarities, and at least that each of the two structures would most naturally have had its various parts *πλησίον ἀλλήλων*, close to one another. It is, of course, typical of the economy of the Homeric style that the same numbers are used. While on this porcine topic, I might also remark that Monro thought there was another probable, or possible, parodical pig in line 419 of this same book, and that it was, of course, the French editor Pierron who made the gourmet's point that, while the *Iliad's* five-year-old steer might be good eating, a five-year-old pig would be "dure et coriace."

All of this effort to find parody in the *Odyssey* must, since Parry's work, run aground on the traditional Homeric style. In modern literature, when we find a grand style and vocabulary transferred from some heroic setting to lowly characters and humble surroundings, we can feel confident that we are dealing with parody—especially if a few characteristic phrases are literally or almost literally reproduced. And even in ancient literature, where the vast gaps in our knowledge must cause us to miss a great deal of parody, when we read the *Batrachomyomachia* and parts of Aristophanes the parody is transparent. Critics in the pre-Parry age naturally looked for similar criteria as a test for parody in the *Odyssey*. But the criteria and the method cannot properly be applied to Homer, because the style and the vocabulary in both poems are almost certainly traditional. It is hardly too much to say that the instances of Iliadic phrases in the *Odyssey* are really no more an indication of parody than the use of the same meter.

I should say in conclusion that I do not want to be understood as arguing that we can feel confident that Homer never used an epithet with deliberate artistic purpose, or as opposing the general theory that Homer sometimes used his formulary language in a wondrously skillful way. On the contrary, I should like to believe that this general theory is correct. But, correct or not, the general theory is of no use to us in dealing with specific individual instances of the sort we have here considered, because the general theory does not contain within itself any principle which will permit us to go on and argue with any justifiable confidence that the particular passage which we greatly admire does in fact show this wondrous skill.

The difficulty is not that Parry's work has proved that there is no artistry in these features of Homer's style, but that he has removed all possibility of any certitude or even reasonable confidence in the criticism of such features of Homeric style and has thus put this side of Homeric criticism into a situation wholly different from similar criticism of, say, Sophocles or Shakespeare. The hard fact is that in this post-Parry era critics are no longer in a position to distinguish the passages in which Homer is merely using a convenient formula from those in which he has consciously and cunningly chosen *le mot juste*. For all that any critic of Homer can now show, the occasional highly appropriate word may, like the occasional highly inappropriate one, be purely coincidental—part of the law of averages, if you like, in the use of the formulary style.

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Shakespearean Elements In Historical Plays Of Strindberg

THE DISTINCTION that Clifford Leech has drawn between a history play as either "drama of document" or "drama of ritual" is a little confusing.[1] For when a drama is primarily a documentation of past events, then it has really moved out of the realm of drama and is merely history masquerading in pseudo-artistic guise—as were the early English chronicle plays. Nor is the term "drama of ritual" a very happy one, implying as it does a tautology—drama of drama—since ritual and symbolic action, embodied by actors on a stage, is the very essence of all true drama and not something restricted to the good history play. What peculiar qualities give a drama its definite identity as "history"? Why should not Shakespeare's *Hamlet* or Strindberg's *En Fredlös* be included among their authors' history plays? Is *Richard II* a "history" or a tragedy? What particular tendency in *Gustav Vasa* makes it seem less "history" than *Folkungasagan*, and *Erik XIV* hardly a history at all?

A remote setting and a treatment, in part, of historical rather than fictional characters are not enough to warrant a play the name of "history." Nor does a playwright's use of a particular historical source produce necessarily a history play. *Macbeth* is based on chronicle matter and *Lear* on a folk tale, but both are tragedies. Strindberg went to factual accounts for *Gustav II Adolf* but to popular legend for *Folkungasagan*, and yet both of them are in at least some respects "histories."

I suggest that, in order to justify the name of "history," a drama must

[1] See Irving Ribner, *The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare* (Princeton, 1957), p. 101.

fulfill four basic requirements: (1) it must have a definite politico-historical background and deal with a specified period in the past; (2) it must have epic scope both in plot and structure, which means for one thing that it needs a panoramic stage; (3) its conception of character should be horizontal rather than vertical—the protagonist should have width rather than depth, be a public figure rather than a private man; (4) it must embody the author's coherent historical purpose to give form and unity to a drama that would otherwise be mere confusion.

For such a drama to move outside the rather narrow orbit of local history, it must also express—like all serious art—the playwright's moral attitude towards his subject matter, an attitude which, if he is successful, will run parallel with but also transcend his historical purpose. Unlike the protagonist in tragedy, however, the personality of the protagonist in a "history" cannot be relied upon to convey this attitude; for an ideal "history" hero is more often than not unconsciously immoral. It is the peculiar distinction between tragedy and "history" that, in the former, the protagonist has a moral conscience—he doubts and questions his own values; in the latter, he has the function of the epic hero, a man of outward deed, in whom there is little discrepancy between thought and action—a man whose motto is expediency and commodity rather than truth and goodness, a man who seldom asks what is right or wrong but always "what works"? The "history" hero is the forerunner of the American pragmatist.

Shakespeare and Strindberg illustrate two solutions to the dilemma of the serious writer of historical drama who wants to express a moral purpose and yet support or demonstrate objectively a norm of political behavior which often uses unscrupulous and dishonest means. In Shakespeare, England or Respublica emerges as the true hero;[2] what the individual kings cannot represent is instead conveyed by an allegorical hero. In Strindberg's *Folkungasagan*, on the other hand, where the whole morality pattern is compressed into a single play, the history hero is an abstraction—an ideal concept of a king—expressed through indirection by criticism of the ruler.[3] And the king himself transcends his personal role as weak monarch to become a symbolic victim, sent by God to cleanse the crown and the country. Shakespeare's method leads to an epic morality pattern; Strindberg's leads to religious ritual.

Both Shakespeare and Strindberg saw history as a "mirror" of the present, which explains in part the abundance of anachronisms in their

[2] E. M. W. Tillyard, *Shakespeare's History Plays* (New York, 1946), pp. 320-321.

[3] Strindberg makes it clear that this criticism is to be taken as objective judgment by letting the humble characters of the chorus express it very emphatically. Cf. also pp. 214-215, below.

historical production. There was a time when critics accused Shakespeare of ignorance, and when Strindberg could not get his *Kristina* produced because it was too unhistorical. The interesting thing, however, is that, as historical dramatists, both writers were actually very conscientious students. We can safely assume that Shakespeare read his Holinshed and Hall, that he more than glanced at the *Mirror of Magistrates,* that he was not as ignorant of Machiavelli as Tillyard wants to make him, that he paid some attention to *Gorboduc, Tamburlaine,* and *Edward III* and worked his way through *The Troublesome Reign of King John.* And if Strindberg scornfully brushed aside the standard "high school" history books of his day—he was not such a traditionalist as Shakespeare—he made all the more thorough a study of Fryxell, Bäckström, and Afzelius *Sagohävder,* those gossipy versions of Sweden's royal past. The more scandalous the stories the more delighted he was, first because they could be put to good dramatic use but second and not least because this was a life he recognized, a true picture of human beings as he saw them.

Like all good dramatists, both Shakespeare and Strindberg used their sources as seemed most relevant to their artistic purposes. They altered old events, telescoped historical time, and changed biographical facts when this was demanded by dramatic expediency—although reluctantly at times. It took Strindberg seven years to overcome his scruples about recasting the unwieldly material for *Bjälbojarlen*; and Shakespeare asks pardon for historical omissions in the prologue to *Henry V,* Act V:

> Vouchsafe to those that have not read the story,
> That I may prompt them: and of such as have,
> I humbly pray them to admit the excuse
> Of time, of numbers and due course of things,
> Which cannot in their huge and proper life
> Be here presented.
>
> (Lines 1-6)

But they commonly depart boldly from their sources, often in order to reinforce a theme. Thus, the introduction of Knut Porse in *Folkungasagan*—the historical Porse had been dead for over twenty years—gives a new dimension to the love-and-intrigue theme. And Shakespeare's Henry V shows a mercy to the citizens of Harfleur that the historical Henry never did, a change that reinforces the main theme of the play, the emergence of the ideal king.

However, such manipulations to make Henry fit Shakespeare's adopted purpose as Elizabethan historian differs strikingly from Strindberg's usual portrayal of royal characters. While Shakespeare presented glorified representatives of Tudor myth and the Elizabethan

concept of de facto kingship, Strindberg rejected contemporary, unrealistic attitudes towards Swedish rulers of the past. In most of the plays following *Folkungasagan* his main objective seems to have been to portray his historical figures "realistically." Having decided that most of the Swedish kings had already apotheosized themselves, he did not hesitate to change Charles XII from the young warrior and hero king of popular belief to "the great criminal, the berserk fighter, the idol of rascals," to present Kristina as a compound of unsuccessful *femme fatale* and emancipated man-hating half-woman, and to let Erik XIV undergo a metamorphosis from romanticized lute-playing poet to a neurotic son of the *fin-de-siècle*. This tendency to a "realistic" rather than an "historical" (i.e., flat and largely unintimate) portrayal of characters was, as we shall see later, one reason for Strindberg's failure to realize fully his grand historical plan.

As in the case of Shakespeare, Strindberg's view of history was part of his *Weltanschauung*. After his "inferno crisis" in 1894 he rejected his earlier atheistic position and, via Swedenborg, Linnæus et al., came to accept a semimystical view of life controlled by "powers" or supernatural agents, in their nature and function not too different from ambiguous and fickle Fortune of the early Middle Ages—both capricious and providential, seemingly irrational, but ultimately instruments of a divine and purposeful will. Strindberg now rejected Buckle's evolutionary interpretation of history; history was no longer materialistic progress but the working out from generation to generation of a retributive justice. He planned to illustrate this in a series of history plays on themes ranging from Erik den Helige to Gustav IV Adolf, unified through the concept of a providential will—with kings as figureheads, the struggle for the throne as the main theme, and the whole nation as the epic setting.

The conception behind Strindberg's plan was no doubt influenced by a cyclic reading of Shakespeare's histories as these plays appear in Hagberg's Swedish translation of 1847. But his historical design was even more grandiose and extensive than Shakespeare's. The cycle was to have covered almost 700 years; it is hardly surprising that it was never completed. The scope of his task and the expansion of his subject matter over so many royal families no doubt contributed to its collapse. His providential scheme was not always, as in Shakespeare, directly related to specified political motives. He was politically much more objective than Shakespeare and his plays therefore lacked unity of political interest. It is significant that the only part of his historical cycle with a scope and a completeness comparable to Shakespeare's is that which deals with the House of the Folkungs, where the controlling theme of retri-

bution is partly fused with—and not as so often later superimposed on —the political action.

Not only did Strindberg's grand cyclic scheme collapse; even within the plays that were written we notice a peculiar process of disintegration. Strindberg's somewhat archaic providential reading of the past was incompatible with his innate tendency towards skepticism. His post-inferno view of life was consistent and stable enough at the time he wrote the first history play within the cycle, *Folkungasagan*; gradually, however, he moved toward a less uniform and philosophical approach to his historical material. At the same time his interest shifted from thematic development to analysis of character. It may very well be about this time that he wrote: "Even in a historical drama, *the purely personal* must be the main interest and history the background; the struggles of the soul arouse more sympathy than fighting soldiers and the assault of the fortresses."[4]

The quotation, from his essay on the historical drama, has often been held to point to one of the basic analogies between Strindberg's and Shakespeare's history plays.[5] But a study of three of Strindberg's major historical dramas—*Folkungasagan, Gustav Vasa,* and *Erik XIV*—will, I think, show that what they share most with Shakespeare's histories is something far more fundamental than a "realistic conception of character," that in fact Strindberg's growing emphasis on the king as an individual, "the purely personal," paralleled as it was by his partial renunciation of an attitude towards history which was also Shakespeare's, actually led him away from his master. As he steered away from Shakespeare, the scope of his individual plays narrowed down to a living-room perspective, so that many of his historical dramas convey, not a uniform and homogeneous view of the past, but "partial perspectives of the modern theater."[6]

Strindberg once remarked, "The bloody war of the Folkung . . . is very much like the Wars of the Roses in England."[7] And his own *Folkungasagan* is in many ways the most Shakespearean of his historical dramas. In some of its major motifs it is, as Miss Bulman has pointed out (p. 140), a rough counterpart to Shakespeare's *Henry VI* trilogy: the quarrel of the nobles in both plays; the theme of Ingeborg and Porse paralleled by that of Margaret of Anjou and Suffolk; the threat of the Danish War balanced by the Cade rebellion.

[4] Strindberg, *Öppna Brev till Intima Teatern,* in *Samlade Skrifter* (Stockholm, 1920), vol. L. Italics mine.

[5] See Joan Bulman, *Strindberg and Shakespeare* (London, 1933), p. 171.

[6] Francis Fergusson, *The Idea of a Theater* (Garden City, N. Y., 1953), pp. 156-158.

[7] *Öppna Brev,* p. 240.

Folkungasagan has some of the diversity and epic scope of *Henry VI,* but it is less episodic in its structure. In spite of its bold use of three parallel minor actions, the three contrasting love stories—the naturalistic (and "Strindbergian") love-hatred of Porse and Ingeborg, the intoxicating passion of Algotson and Blanche that fades away with death, and the idyllic Ferdinand-Miranda love of Erik and Beatrix—the play is clearly conceived and firmly controlled. The main theme of *satisfactio vicaria,* i.e., Magnus' expiation of an ancestral crime, is expressed not only in Magnus' personal destiny but in the very movement of the play—the strong ritualistic elements in the plague scene, the choral singing, Birgitta's and the Maniac's prophecies. Even the bloodletting of Porse in the opening scene can be regarded as a mock ritual and an anticipation of his "sacrificial" speech after the deposition of Magnus:

> Thirty years ago, on the day of Saint Simon and Saint Jude, Prince Magnus, the legally elected and chosen King of the realm, was beheaded on the Island of the Holy Spirit. He was admittedly innocent but was sentenced to death because of his father, King Birger. So there has been blood guilt on the Swedish crown since then; for that reason, say our spiritual ancestors, misfortune and years of disaster have come as punishment upon Magnus. The crown has now been cleansed, the judgment of God has been fulfilled, and the blood guilt atoned for [IV, i].

The plague scene (Act IV) deserves some attention. Strindberg took it from Boccaccio, but his use of it indicates his "Shakespearean" ability to make a source an integral part of his own structure. The scene has a tremendous impact when presented on the stage, and not merely that of visual effect or of pageantry. It has in one sense the same function as the son-who-has-killed-father—father-who-has-killed-son scene in *3 Henry VI* (II, v): to depict vividly the horrors of internal chaos and dissension. In Shakespeare the scene is brief, pathetic, and highly artificial. Strindberg's episode is more realistic than stylized but nevertheless suggests a ritual pattern and sets the essential tone of the play. His use of the plague scene actually transcends anything the early Shakespeare could do and reminds us more of the mature Shakespeare, who knew not only how to bring ritual elements into his plays but also how to make them dramatically effective. The plague scene is the dramatization of a physically and spiritually diseased society.

The analogy between *Folkungasagan* and *Henry VI* extends to the portraits of the kings as rulers. Strindberg's Magnus is, like Henry VI, a pious "weakling," fit for a monastic life but totally incapable of ruling a kingdom. Magnus' title to the crown is as deeply flawed as Henry's. Both rule in times so tumultuous that only a forceful ruler could preserve the crown against attack. Because of Magnus' and Henry's weak-

ness, the great nobles seize a chance to strike at the throne and become more eager to fight one another than the common enemy abroad. In the end, the weakness of the royal figureheads and the internal discords bring about the loss of most of the two countries' foreign possessions.

Both Henry and Magnus are criticized by other characters for their lack of initiative. Queen Margaret points out that

> Great lords, wise men ne'er sit and wail their loss
> But cheerly seek how to redress their harms.
> (*3 H. VI*, iv, 1-2)

And in *Folkungasagan* Ingeborg reprimands Magnus, "Yes, complain now, that's what you can do! But act, never!" (I, ii). And later on to Porse, "My son has himself caused his fall . . . a ruler must be able to do the impossible" (III, i).

Thus in both plays it is a serious shortcoming in a king ever to yield to despair; such behavior is incompatible with royal duty and responsibility. There is, however, one important difference. The total effect of *Folkungasagan* conveys something more than a political issue about the demands of kingship. Magnus is defeated, not only because he is weak, but because God has chosen him as a *satisfactio vicaria*; through Magnus the crime of the Folkungs is finally expiated. This explains Magnus' passive role, which has often been criticized. Like Richmond in *Richard III*, Magnus' character has to be underdeveloped, because his function is instrumental rather than active. On the symbolic level we do not have a king deposed by his rebellious people; rather we have a martyr of God, used by his creator to fulfill the retributive purpose for which he was created. But Magnus' function is not only to expiate a private ancestral sin; he transcends his role as the last of the Folkungs, and through his sacrifice his own society is purged of its evil. Ingeborg and Porse are banished, Birgitta is penitent.

Together with certain aspects of his next historical play, *Gustav Vasa*, Strindberg's *Folkungasagan* offers the closest analogy to Shakespeare's histories. The first important point of comparison is the method of painting history on a broad canvas. The effect is a vivid and animated picture of a bustling world where the grotesque mingles with the pathetic, and where a whole age comes to life on the stage. Strindberg's conscious adaptation of Shakespeare's "free composition" allows him maximum variety—widely spaced character grouping and wide changes of scene, parallel actions, and multiple plots.[8] At the same time we have

[8] ". . . I was determined to study how he [Shakespeare] built up a drama. It is then that I noticed that Shakespeare is both formless and at the same time a strict pedantic formalist." *Letters*, p. 52. Cf. Bulman, p. 109, and Martin Lamm, *Strindbergs Dramer* (Stockholm, 1926), II, 102.

a feeling of control, and this—perhaps the very essence of the play—is achieved by constant reference to a unifying theme, in *Folkungasagan* to that of *satisfactio vicaria*. Furthermore, the historical background—the Wars of the Roses and the war of the Folkungs—gives us a similar picture of two countries torn by rebellion and disorder at home, and by fighting and loss of their conquests abroad. Finally, Strindberg's providential world view enables him to see history and its political actions as Shakespeare ultimately saw them—as a purposeful pattern of divine justice and not merely as a capricious sequence of events.

But, in Shakespeare, the suggestion of the political action as part of a ritual pattern, an expiation for the initial crime of deposing and murdering Richard II, is a pattern which emerges clearly only from a reading of all of the histories. In *Folkungasagan*, on the other hand, the ritual action *is* the play. By the telescoping of this aspect of the providential pattern of Shakespeare's histories into a single play, *Folkungasagan* leaves in part the world of social and political affairs to move into a realm of religious ritual and incantation. Through the fate of Magnus the drama comes to ignore the question of the relation between public and private virtues in a king (the theme of *Henry VI*). Strindberg's drama is a "history" in its panoramic scope, in its setting and in its literal action; but on an allegorical level—through its basic religious pattern—it also passes beyond the local history play.

In Strindberg's next play, *Gustav Vasa*, the Shakespearean technique of presenting history in a vast perspective is already on the wane, and I find it hard to agree with those critics who regard this drama as the climax of Shakespearean construction in Strindberg (Bulman, p. 145). True, its character grouping is roughly based on the two *Henry IV* plays, with Erik and Göran corresponding to Prince Hal and Falstaff, and Prince Johan to Prince John and Hotspur (the king wishes Johan to be his successor). The analogy, however, is so superficial that a reader who did not happen to know that Strindberg was particularly fond of *Henry IV* might never notice the relationship. More important perhaps is the juxtaposition of high political affairs with familiar pictures of low life. As in *Henry IV* the vision of reality is expanded to include court and tavern, king and country folk—but this is actually a Shakespearean carry-over from *Folkungasagan*.

Another Shakespearean feature is the interruption of the main action in Act II—the rebellion against the king—to introduce two parallel actions: Jacob and Herman Israel, a variation of the father-son relationship, and Prince Erik and his boon companion Göran, who are hardly an integral part of the play but are perhaps brought in to furnish a link to the already planned sequel, *Erik XIV*.

In spite of the rapid movement of *Gustav Vasa* and the frequent shiftings of scene, the final impression is not that of the panoramic spectacle of *Folkungasagan*. The different impact of *Gustav Vasa* is due partly to a toning down of the providential view and partly to Strindberg's changing concept of the king from a public symbol to a three-dimensional individual—a change which takes place within the play itself. The controlling idea from *Folkungasagan*—the sacrificial role of the king—figured in the first draft of the play but was later discarded. Yet there are numerous remnants of this original conception in the final version. The opening scene is a more obvious staging of a ritual than in *Folkungasagan*: the choral rhythm of the speech between Måns Nilson and his wife, the beating of the drums off stage, and the culmination of the ceremony when the bloody coats from the blood bath are brought in. Another possible vestige of a sacrificial plan is the beggar scene of Act IV, which seems like the re-enactment of the old ritual of the Fisher King—the disguised ruler descending among his people.

This drama, as is true of most of Strindberg's historical plays that followed it, takes its title from the ruler, an indication of an altered purpose in his composition; he is no longer writing a religious "saga," but the life of a king. In that sense the play is closer to the construction of Shakespeare's individual histories than is *Folkungasagan*.

In its changing concept of the king, *Gustav Vasa* has its parallel in Shakespeare. The drama in a way moves from a *Henry V* to a *Richard II*, i.e., from an identification of the king with his public office to an indication of moral self-probing, a questioning in the protagonist himself of his role as king and as private man. The change takes place in the second half of the play. Up to that point, Gustav, though far from a religious symbol as was Magnus, has nevertheless been regarded by his people and his family as an ominous "duplicate" of the Eternal One, a concept which the king himself accepts. But, as the drama proceeds, the king changes from a threatening, and for two acts invisible, public symbol to a private man. This metamorphosis is paralleled by a narrowing of the panoramic scope of the play as we move from the country into Stockholm, from Dalarna into the king's parlor. Gustav is still preoccupied with political problems and the threat of rebellion, but the focus is now almost entirely on his personal conflict. Although Strindberg makes an open and rather undramatic use of his providential philosophy, he restricts it to serve as personal motivation for Gustav. The result is that the earlier portrait of the king as a forceful ruler of his country now changes into a Swedish replica of Richard II, who substitutes action for a dependence upon divine protection.

The analogy between Gustav and Richard goes further than that,

however, for there is in both an attempt at self-exploration, a questioning of their own moral standards, and a dishonest dismissal of the problem through a histrionic dramatization of themselves. It is primarily this changing perspective of the king from an overpowering public symbol to a potentially tragic hero that accounts for the hybrid quality of the drama. *Gustav Vasa* is Strindberg's *Richard II*—partly "history," partly tragedy.

Many critics see *Gustav Vasa* and *Erik XIV,* the play immediately following, as a unity, and Strindberg himself wanted the plays to form a group—the Vasa Saga. It is, however, a unity based on rather arbitrary devices: introduction of the same characters, references to historical data, and use of family genealogies. But it is hard to see any genuine thematic connection between the two dramas. In fact, *Erik XIV* is, as Martin Lamm has already pointed out, without any basic theme and without any clearly conceived artistic plan. Thus Erik's shifting role from prince to king does not form an analogy to the education theme of *Henry IV* and *Henry V,* for the only change that Erik undergoes is one of title—instead of a madcap *prince* he becomes a madcap *king.*

Strindberg's notes on the play show the same ambivalent attitude *vis-à-vis* his material that we find in *Gustav Vasa.* His first plan was for a "Swedenborg drama" with Erik's superstition as a major theme. Erik was to have gone through a series of religious crises and finally end as an alchemist and black magician, abandoned and in the end deposed by his people. The outline of this early idea indicates a much broader Shakespearean conception than the final version:

> Act I: Mourning for Gustav I.
> Act II: The Wedding.
> Act III: Witchcraft.
> Act IV: Sture-murder. Erik is imprisoned.
> (Bulman, p. 146)

But the growing emphasis on the private character of the king which we noticed in *Gustav Vasa* came to absorb more and more of Strindberg's interest. In *Erik XIV* he abandons his providential view altogether. The public aspect of kingship disappears entirely, and the drama is reduced to a study of a "characterless character," an amoral and pathological individual. As a consequence the play is finally conceived on a much smaller scale than the earlier histories, and there is hardly a remnant of the Shakespearean technique of *Folkungasagan* and *Gustav Vasa.* It is no mere coincidence that *Erik XIV* opens, not with the Shakespearean throng and "chorus" of *Folkungasagan's* barber scene or *Gustav Vasa's* Dalecarlian inquisition, but with the furious Erik, who from his balcony throws nails and flower pots on his councilor and his

mistress. Throughout the entire play all the events, with the exception of Göran's love story, are arranged primarily with a view to the effect they will have or the light they may throw on the king's personality.

The analytic temper of the play can be traced back to *Gustav Vasa*. Gustav himself tries to some extent to see his actions in terms of morality, but Prince Erik gives us his whole psychological background. His is the modern dissecting mind that has to explain his unbalanced behavior in terms of various complexes:

> I, alone, abandoned since my mother died; I, hated by my stepmother, by my father and by my half-brother... This lovelessness in which I am born and brought up has become a fire in my soul that consumes me; my blood is poisoned in birth, and I do not believe there is any antidote [*Gustav Vasa*, II, i].

Erik XIV is to a large extent a picture of the consequences of unfulfilled mother love. Erik XIV is a modern problem child in court costume.[9]

The historical dramas immediately following *Erik XIV*, i.e., *Gustav IV Adolf, Karl XII, Engelbrekt, Kristina,* and in 1902 *Gustav III*, are isolated and independent works. Of these the last three deal merely with episodes in the private life of the ruler or with the ruler's personal reaction to political events. But *Gustav IV Adolf* and *Karl XII* show that Strindberg did not surrender willingly to a simplified, non-Shakespearean structure. They are both gigantic efforts to return to the panoramic scale of *Folkungasagan*. *Gustav IV Adolf* would take six hours to perform, and the action carries us over a large part of Germany during the Thirty Years War. But the king himself, a potential Henry V, seems, as Lamm has pointed out (p. 173), more like a nice gentle schoolboy than a political genius. The outline to *Karl XII* indicates a more spirited and bustling drama than the final, rather static version of the play:

> Act I: (a) Lund. In the students' rooms. Students lynched as soldiers.
> (b) Market scene. The peasants. The returned prisoners from Siberia. The plague has come from Cracow.
> Act II: (a) Swedenborg.
> (b) At the university. Festival for the king.
>
> (Bulman, p. 150)

Finally, the three historical dramas of 1908—*Siste Riddaren* (The Last of the Knights), *Sten Sture,* and *Bjälbojarlen*—are weak attempts to return to a cyclic structure.

Thus Strindberg's historical cycle broke into fragments—although in one sense he had already completed its pattern in *Folkungasagan*—

[9] Strindberg thought he could see a similarity between Erik XIV and (an almost Ernest Jonesian) Hamlet. *Öppna Brev*, p. 75.

and his individual historical plays gradually lost their panoramic perspective. This movement is naturally paralleled by a movement away from Shakespeare. It seems to have been caused by a continuous encroachment of the modern analytic temper upon a providential attitude towards history (and life) which was largely that of Shakespeare, and upon a concept of the king as a public man whose identity is his public office—the true Shakespearean "history" hero.

Taken together, *Folkungasagan, Gustav Vasa,* and *Erik XIV* may be said to form a three-act drama of fulfillment and disintegration, with the peripeteia occurring in the second half of *Gustav Vasa.* In their development from religious ritual and "history" through pseudo tragedy to psychological drama, these plays epitomize a wide span in the history of the theater; they also indicate the completion of what Francis Fergusson has called the movement towards chaos in post-Shakespearean drama (p. 154). *Folkungasagan* represents an obsolete attempt to see history *sub specie aeternitatis.* In *Gustav Vasa* the ambivalent concept of the king gives us a hybrid play of the same category as *Richard II.* In *Erik XIV* psychology has replaced morality, and motivation meaningful action, so that the play illustrates what we could call the analytic fallacy of the modern theater—its self-conscious preoccupation with the individual psyche to the exclusion of the more fundamental aspects of the drama—its ritual movement, its *moto spirital.*

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The Middle English *Sir Tristrem*: Toward A Reappraisal

THE MIDDLE ENGLISH poem *Sir Tristrem* has not been very highly regarded by present-day mediaeval scholars. A. B. Taylor, for example, considers the metrical and stanzaic form of the poem "a particularly unsuitable measure . . . the doggerel verse of which was hopeless for a story of tragic love."[1] And R. S. Loomis comments that the story itself is in this version "garbled and condensed,"[2] implying, as many another scholar has implied, that the poem is much inferior to the French original from which it seems almost certainly derived—the twelfth-century poem of Thomas of Britain.

The first of these criticisms I do not propose to dispute, though it should be pointed out that among scholars of a generation ago Jessie L. Weston thought "the abrupt and vivid style [of the poem] not without a charm of its own,"[3] and George Saintsbury saw a certain crude strength in the poet's metrical form, even though admitting that "the stanza used is one of those complicated and bizarre ones . . . which came from the attempt to adjust Provençal-French metres to English rhythm."[4]

But concerning the general criticism that the *Sir Tristrem* is a "garbled and condensed" version of a much finer original, something

[1] *An Introduction to Medieval Romance* (London, 1930), p. 158.
[2] *The Romance of Tristram and Ysolt* (New York, 1951), p. xxxii.
[3] *The Chief Middle English Poets* (New York, 1914), p. 377.
[4] *A Short History of English Literature* (New York, 1900), p. 85. In fact, here (pp. 85-86) and later (in his introduction to Dorothy Sayers's *Tristan in Brittany*, London, 1929, pp. xi-xii), Saintsbury attributes to the poem "one of the finest lines in all poetry—'And Mark rewed therefor' when the sunbeam glints on Iseult's face as she lies sleeping by Tristram's side."

considerably further needs to be said; and I should like here to offer some comments toward a reappraisal of the poem as a whole.

If an examination of the various versions of the Tristan legend will show us anything at all about the workings of the mediaeval poetic mind, it is that each poet treated his subjects in terms of the tastes of his own audience. Thomas of Britain, for example, a poet with an extremely subtle mind, writing for a highly sophisticated courtly audience, makes of his version of the *Tristan* little more than a greatly extended poem in the *débat* tradition. He probes analytically, almost tediously, the innermost emotions of each of his four main characters, setting forth time after time, and in minutest detail, the dilemmas which beset not only the lovers, but King Mark and Isoud of the White Hands as well; and he concludes each separate phase of his analysis with the conventional courtly device of a *demande d'amour*—with whom should we sympathize finally: the lovers, with their tragically fatal love for each other; the second Isoud, Tristan's anxious but untouched bride; or Mark, in this poem, but for occasional lapses, the kindly and generous king who becomes essentially the real victim of Tristan and Isoud's tragic yet unconquerable love? For 648 lines of the first Sneyd fragment, to cite but one example, Thomas analyzes and debates the dilemma which faces Tristan when, having married the second Isoud, he cannot bring himself to a consummation of that marriage because of his devotion to the first. The crux of the matter is this:

> Car tant ai fait vers la reine,
> Culcher ne dei od la meschine,
> E envers la meschine tant fait
> Que ne puet mie estre retrait;
> N'Ysolt ne dei jo trichier
> Ne ma femme ne dei laissier,
> Ne mei dei de li partir
> Ne jo ne dei ove li gesir.
> S'a ceste tinc convenance,
> Dunc ment a Ysolt ma fiance;
> E si jo port a Ysolt ma fei,
> Vers ma espuse me deslei.
> (Lines 447-458)[5]

And in the first Turin fragment Thomas discusses individually the dilemma of each of his characters:

> Entre ces quatre ot estrange amor:
> Tut en ourent painne e dolur,

[5] I quote Thomas' poem from *Les Fragments du Tristan de Thomas*, ed. Bartina H. Wind (Leiden, 1950).

E un e autre en tristur vit;
En nul d'aus nen i a deduit.
(Lines 71-74)

To the second Isoud her marriage to Tristan is joyless because unconsummated. In spite of his desire, Tristan abstains from consummating that marriage in penance for the breach of faith that it represents toward the first Isoud; yet he is all too well aware that the first Isoud is called upon to fulfill her marital obligations to King Mark. And, in her turn, the first Isoud, desiring Tristan alone, is repelled by but helpless against Mark's legitimate claims. Finally, Mark has the first Isoud's body, but not her love. Thomas ends the lengthy analysis of these various plights with his typical *demande d'amour*:

La parole mettrai avant,
Le jugement facent amant,
A quel estoit mieuz de l'amor
Ou sanz lui ait greignor dolur.
(Lines 148-151)

It is exactly the opposite with Eilhart and Béroul; in their versions of the story all things are either black or white. While Thomas was preoccupied with the psychological subtleties of his characters' dilemmas, Eilhart and Béroul, being minstrels and having in mind a totally different kind of audience, were concerned almost entirely with externals—hazardous and adventurous episodes centering largely around the lovers' deceptions of King Mark, whose character in their versions is sufficiently degraded so that he deserves little better than to be deceived.

The Middle English poet's treatment of the tragic story is like neither of these two extremes. On the one hand, he was much too interested in his characters as people to present their story wholly for the sake of its external adventures. On the other hand, while he followed closely either the poem of Thomas of Britain or some remarkably similar version, he was little interested in presenting the psychological intricacies of a system of courtly love which, probably, he did not understand in the first place. What he was concerned with—and this is a habit of mind typical, I suspect, of nearly all of the Middle English narrative poets—was the presentation of a story so rationalized and so moralized that it would satisfy in terms of its own implicit *solace* and *sentence* the expectations of his relatively uncultured audience. It is just this, I think, that accounts not only for the balladlike stanzaic form of the *Sir Tristrem*, but for both the kind and number of the alterations which, in the very consistency of their effect, suggest that the poet

was not "garbling" haphazardly the version of his source, but proceeding in accordance with a fairly definite idea of just what would and would not appeal to his particular audience. It is just this, too, which should make us question seriously a conclusion such as Taylor's that because it typifies "the carelessness and lack of attention to artistic detail so common in English romance . . . [the] 'Sir Tristrem' is an extreme example of clumsy adaptation . . . "[6]

As I have pointed out, the English poet's alterations of his probable source suggest his desire to rationalize and to moralize the characters and events of his original. As though in explanation of the first of these desires, he interrupts the movement of his narrative early in the poem to inform his audience that, to tell this tale aright, one must "wite þe riȝt way / þe styes for to lere"—must "know just how to show each step clearly."[7] Accordingly, there is scarcely a single episode in the story in which the poet does not deviate from his source to add or alter a detail that will make the incidents of that part of the story either more credible in themselves or more consistent with the incidents of other episodes. Fearing, for example, that his audience might not accept Tristrem's too ready and too ingenious adoption of the name Tramtrist in the episode of his voyage for healing, the poet rationalizes this ingenuity by adding earlier in the story a detail which occurs in no other version: upon the death of Tristrem's parents, Rohant "cleped" Tristrem "þo tram bifor þe trist" (line 253) in order to conceal his identity from Duke Morgan, who has ravaged the realm of Hermonie and who has been responsible directly for the slaying of Tristrem's father and indirectly for the death of his mother. And, to motivate Rohant's action more credibly than he found it motivated in his source, the *Tristrem* poet altered still another detail. In the Norwegian Robert's version of the story—and therefore probably in the version of Thomas of Britain —Rohant hides Tristan in his own castle, bids his wife take to her bed, and, after a suitable time, claims that his wife has given birth to a son. Confronted with the problem of asking his audience to believe that Duke Morgan would be taken in by so implausible an artifice as a nine-month-old yet newborn child, the English poet invents a much more reasonable device for the concealment of Tristrem's identity; Rohant's wife is delivered of a child at the same time that Tristem is born, and Rohant then represents Tristrem as one of his own twin sons—" [Rohant] seyd he hadde children to" (line 249).

Later in the story, after the marriage of Isoud and King Mark, Tris-

[6] *Medieval Romance*, p. 153.

[7] Lines 399-400. I quote from *Sir Tristrem*, ed. George P. McNeill (London, 1886).

trem's secret meetings with the queen are detected by Mariadoc and revealed to Mark. Except for one detail the *Tristrem* poet follows his source closely here: Mariadoc awakens one night to find Tristrem gone; he follows Tristrem's footprints in the snow to Isoud's chamber and then reports to Mark the queen's unfaithfulness. The English poet, however, has treated Mark's character fairly well up to this point, and seems scarcely to expect his audience to believe that Mark would accept such circumstantial evidence in this matter as Mariadoc's word. He therefore adds the realistic and explanatory details that Tristrem enters the queen's chamber by means of a loose board in the wall and accidentally tears off a piece of his green cloak. Then, following the prints in the snow, Mariadoc finds not only the loose board in Isoud's bower but the torn piece of Tristrem's cloak; and it is this last evidence that convinces Mark of the lovers' guilt (lines 1926-1960).

The English poet apparently cared little for the element of the supernatural that he found in his source. He discards completely the magic motif of Peticru's bells—which, when heard, will dispel the cares of even the most sorrowful person. And he deliberately omits to tells us that the wounds which Tristrem receives from Morholt are poisonous wounds, perhaps because this would require, as in his source, their magical healing by Isoud. There was little that he could do, of course, to eliminate, or even to modify, the element of magic connected with the love potion—that central motif upon which turns every version of the legend except that of Gottfried. But, having retained this much of his original, he makes use of the love potion to strengthen the motivation of what might have seemed to his audience another weakness in the story; for in an obvious attempt to give some rational explanation for the unusual faithfulness of Tristrem's dog, Hodain, he deviates from his source to tell us that the dog, too, partakes of the love potion, licking the dregs of the nearly drained cup which Brangwain sets down on the deck of the lovers' ship:

> An hounde þer was biside,
> Þat was y cleped hodain;
> Þe coupe he licked þat tide
> Þo doun it sett bringwain;
> Þei loued al in lide
> And þer of were þai fain;
> To gider þai gun abide
> In ioie and ek in pain
> For þougt.[8]

[8] Lines 1673-1681. So far as I know, this incident occurs in only one other and very remote version of the *Tristan* story, the thirteenth-century Italian *Il Tristano*

Like any good ballad writer, the *Tristrem* poet usually refrains from commenting directly on the events of his story. Several of his deviations from his source, however, suggest that he was consciously attempting in his version of the story to supply a kind of implicit moral *sentence* that he found lacking in his original. In Thomas' poem, for example, Tristan indulges in an extremely self-conscious and self-recriminating "debate between body and soul" in persuading himself to accept the second Isoud as his bride. The English poet would have none of this; but the incident itself afforded him an opportunity to attribute to Tristrem a moral attitude, or insight, which he is never allowed in any other version of the story. Having been offered the second Isoud "to wiue," Tristrem briefly reviews the circumstances that have led to his exile from Mark's court; and, concerning his relationship with the first Isoud, he concludes:

> "Icham in sorwe and pine,
> Þer to hye haþ me brouȝt.
> Hir loue, y say, is mine,
> Þe *boke* seyt it is nouȝt
> Wiþ riȝt."
> (Lines 2667-2671; italics mine)

Occasionally, in a single deviation from his source, the *Tristrem* poet manages both to rationalize and to moralize his version of the story. To provide a consistency of motivation which he must have felt that his original lacked, he casts as brothers Tristrem's four major antagonists —Duke Morgan, Morholt, Urgaine, and Beliagog. With this relationship furnished, his audience could be expected to see that Tristrem's battles against these adversaries are fought not merely in behalf of four right but unconnected causes, but as a part of his general revenge upon Duke Morgan for the slaying of his father. Moreover, in describing these battles, the poet brings Tristrem to the very brink of defeat, and then has him call upon God for aid—which, forthcoming, enables him to recover and win the battle. For the first of these deviations the English poet probably found some precedent in his source. In the Norwegian Robert's *Tristan* Moldagog (Beliagog) is nephew to Urgan and to a giant whom Tristan had killed in Spain; and all three of these are descendents of Orguiles, a giant who, a generation before, had attempted to add King Arthur's beard to his mantle.

But, so far as I can find, there is in no other version of the story any-

riccardiano, ed. Ernesto G. Parodi (Bologna, 1896), Chap. LVII. E. G. Gardiner calls attention to this peculiar circumstance in *The Arthurian Legend in Italian Literature* (London, 1930), pp. 70-71.

thing like the Christian humility which the *Tristrem* poet attributes to his hero in battle—the invocation of divine aid and the realization of a need to put the outcome of his struggles in God's hands. Even more significant is the fact that the poet makes use of this device to achieve some measure of character development in Tristrem, who is, after all, a relatively static character in most early versions of the story. Over the full span of the poem it is with a kind of progressive emphasis that Tristrem acquires this humility and this awareness of the need to place his trust in a power higher than his own. Early in the poem, for example, Tristrem comes to Duke Morgan "wiþ pride"; he is a "bold . . . prout swayne" who—crying "Amendes!"—slays Morgan as he sits unarmed at dinner. A little later Tristrem challenges Morholt with words "shortliche seyde in lede," and, though the poet interposes in the description of the ensuing battle one of his own rare words of encouragement,

> God help tristrem þe knigt!
> He faugt for ingland,

he nevertheless seems to regard disapprovingly the taunting remarks that Tristrem flings after the mortally wounded and fleeing Morholt:

> A word þat pended to pride
> Tristrem, þo spac he:—
> "Folk of yrland side,
> 3our mirour ge may se.
> Mo þat hider will ride,
> Þus grayþed schul ge be."
> (Lines 1090-1095)

Still later in the poem, after Tristrem's first voyage to Ireland, and after he has achieved not only "courtesie," but something of this attribute of Christian humility, he encounters the Irish dragon. Having broken two spears on "þe deuel dragouns hide," and having had his horse slain under him by the dragon's fiery breath,

> Tristrem, wiþ outen wene,
> Stirt vnder a tre
> Al stille
> And seyd:—"god in trinite,
> No lat þou me nougt spille."
> (Lines 1459-1463)

The tide of battle turns immediately, and Tristrem kills the dragon; but afterwards we see little of Tristrem's early boastfulness. Instead, we are told that

> No was he neuer so fain
> As þan þat batail was don.
> (Lines 1481-1482)

The pattern is much the same, yet more emphatically so, in the poet's description of Tristrem's two remaining battles with Urgaine and Beliagog. In each case, on the verge of being slain, Tristrem calls upon God for aid. Brought to earth by Urgaine's "sterne stroke,"

> Vp he stirt bidene
> And heried godes sand
> Almiȝt.
> (Lines 2350-2352)

And after an even closer call in his battle against Beliagog,

> Tristrem bleynt bi side
> God he þonked þan
> Almiȝt.
> (Lines 2779-2781)

Taken singly, the *Tristrem* poet's alterations of his original may seem to represent an unnecessary and completely whimsical "garbling" of the story. Yet the cumulative force of even the relatively few examples of those alterations which I have described here suggests, I think, that he was not indiscriminately condensing or muddling his source, but reworking it both in form and spirit in an effort to render it more consistent with his own tastes and with the tastes of the English audience for which his version was intended. Like Helaine Newstead, we may wish at times that he had not abridged and altered so drastically, in order that his version might furnish a more reliable "guide to the content of Thomas's poem";[9] but, given what we have, it seems to me that it will be incumbent upon future scholarship to evaluate the English *Sir Tristrem* more nearly in terms of its own intrinsic worth than has generally been the case in the past.

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[9] "The Tryst beneath the Tree: An Episode in the Tristan Legend," *RPh*, IX (1956), 269-284.

W. T. BANDY

James Russell Lowell, Sainte-Beuve, and The *Atlantic Monthly*

IN 1857, the Boston firm of Phillips and Sampson, specialists in pirated editions of British authors, decided to found a literary periodical. The time was not auspicious, for this country was in the throes of what would today be called a severe depression, but the hard-headed senior partner, Moses D. Phillips, had finally yielded to the persuasive arguments of his literary adviser, F. H. Underwood, and invited a group of prospective contributors to come to his home on May 15, 1857 for the purpose of discussing plans for the magazine over the dinner table. Present were Longfellow, Emerson, Lowell, Motley, Holmes, and other members of the local intelligentsia.

The title of *Atlantic Monthly* was suggested by Holmes and Lowell was appointed editor, at a salary of $2,500 per annum. After all details were settled, Underwood ("our literary man," as Phillips referred to him) was sent off to Europe in June, with the mission of inducing the literati of England and the continent to submit their writings to the new magazine, which offered them fifty dollars for poems and from five to ten dollars a page for articles. If we may judge by the small number who accepted, Underwood must have encountered some resistance, due in part no doubt to the firm's well-known custom of appropriating the works of foreign authors without paying them royalties.[1]

Among those who were receptive to Underwood's proposal was Sainte-Beuve. Shortly after the first number of the *Atlantic* appeared, Lowell wrote to Sainte-Beuve as follows:

[1] Most of the facts given here concerning the founding of the *Atlantic Monthly* are taken from R. C. Beatty's *James Russell Lowell* (Nashville, 1942).

Boston, U.S. 17th Novr. 1857.

Sir,

I take the liberty to address you in behalf of Messrs Phillips and Sampson, booksellers here, who are desirous of obtaining your valuable aid in a monthly journal which they have just established. You have perhaps not forgotten that in an interview with Mr. Underwood (their agent) last summer you were kind enough to give him hope that you would not be unwilling to comply with such a request as soon as your engagements would permit. They venture therefore to bring the matter again to your recollection.

What they would like would be lively sketches—such as no one is so competent to write as yourself—that would keep the readers of the journal *au courant* of contemporary French literature. I am sure that a style like yours, which, with all the grace and *Esprit* so peculiar to your countrymen combines a truly English solidity and good sense, would be especially susceptible of translation and I will gladly take that responsibility on myself in respect of anything you may choose to send. You may rest assured that you can write in entire confidence—your name will be kept secret—and you will have the society of Emerson, Prescott, Longfellow, Motley, and others, the most eminent among American authors.

Allow me personally to thank you for the pleasure and instruction I have derived from your books. As the successor of Mr. Longfellow in the professorship of *belles lettres* at Cambridge, I have occasion frequently to recommend your *Causeries du Lundi* to my classes as at once the most entertaining and comprehensive guide to French literature.

I should have addressed you in French had I had confidence enough in my ability to write a letter in that language to one who is such a master in it, but I am sure that English must be almost like a mother-tongue to the author of the admirable Essays on Horace Walpole and Chesterfield.

I have the honor to be
sir, your most obedient servant
J. R. Lowell.

Be kind enough to address
Professor James Russell Lowell,
Cambridge
Massachusetts
U.S. America[2]

Sainte-Beuve responded to Lowell's flattering invitation by sending him an eleven-page manuscript on Béranger, which was printed in the *Atlantic* for February 1858.[3] Shortly thereafter, Lowell wrote to thank him and to ask for a second article:

[2] This previously unpublished letter, together with the following one, is contained in the Spoelberch de Lovenjoul collection at Chantilly, "Lettres addressées à Sainte-Beuve," D 605, ff. 478-482. I am grateful to my friend, Monsieur Claude Pichois, for providing me with copies of the text and to Monsieur Jean Pommier, curator of the collection, for permission to publish them.

[3] The subject lies without the scope of this article, but it is interesting to speculate on Sainte-Beuve's reason for choosing to write on Béranger, on whom he had already done several articles, rather than on his friend Baudelaire, for example. As one who had done much for American literature in making Poe's works known in France, Baudelaire might have been a good subject, especially

CAMBRIDGE, 15th Feb. 1858.

MY DEAR SIR,

Your communication reached me safely, and was precisely what I hoped and expected from you. An essay upon Béranger was especially timely and yours charmed me by its quiet force of style (so rare in our day—when only bags of muscle, like Baccio Bandinelli's Hercules, gain the credit of strength) and by that justice of mind which, you will allow me to say—is almost peculiar to you among contemporary critics.

I translated the article myself with great care and (allowance being made for the different genius of our language) have done it, I hope, no great injustice. The delicate shades of expression which make so great a part of excellence in writing, necessarily suffer in translation; but I think you will find that you have not been misunderstood. It is as impossible to translate *style* as to render in words that bloom of color which invests the shores of the bay of Naples.

May I hope soon to receive another favor from you? I know that an essay is not to be ordered like a bale of silks, but I cannot help suggesting Rachel in an excellent subject.

I said nothing to you of any *honorarium*—for I am not a man of affairs—but you will receive a draft by the post which carries this for an amount which I hope will be satisfactory. It is based on the highest rate paid in America. I know not if publishers in France be more liberal.

Your Ms. as you directed has not gone out of my own keeping and will not do so—nor have I allowed your name to transpire. This last caution was predicated upon the other, though you said nothing about it. Was I right? It would be to the advantage of the Magazine to have it known that you were a contributor—but I await your directions.

With distinguished consideration,
I have the honor to be,
dear sir, your obedient servant
J. R. LOWELL

True to his promise, Lowell never allowed Sainte-Beuve's manuscript to pass out of his hands. After his death, it became the property of his literary executor, Charles Eliot Norton, who bequeathed it to the Library of Harvard University, where it still remains. The manuscript was discovered there some thirty years ago by R. L. Hawkins, who made public for the first time the original French text.[4]

Lowell's translation was not a bad one, on the whole. Despite "all the grace and *Esprit*" of Sainte-Beuve's style, or perhaps because of his "truly English solidity and good sense," Lowell managed to present

since his *Fleurs du Mal* had just been published. Sainte-Beuve had the opportunity to present the *Atlantic* with an article on a first-rate living (but unpopular) poet, instead of one on a mediocre dead poet, however popular. Whether Lowell would have relished such an article is another question. In any event, it was the *Atlantic Monthly*, under the editorship of one of his successors, which published the first article on Baudelaire by an American (Eugene Benson, "Charles Baudelaire, Poet of the Malign," *Atlantic Monthly*, Feb. 1869).

[4] Richmond Laurin Hawkins, "Un Article inédit de Sainte-Beuve sur Béranger," *RHL*, XXXVI (1929), 427-438.

him to American readers without betraying him, except occasionally. Faced with an unusual difficulty, the translator would sometimes solve the problem by simply omitting the troublesome words:

SAINTE BEUVE	LOWELL
Il faisait l'illusion d'être plus grand que son genre, comme un héros de haute taille qui se ferait nain pour mieux harceler son monde et pour se glisser plus aisément dans la place assiégée.	He produces the impression of superiority to his class.

On at least one occasion, Lowell must have misread Sainte-Beuve's handwriting. There seems to be no other logical explanation of the extraordinary rendering he gave of this phrase:

SAINTE-BEUVE	LOWELL
... dieu de la *Congrégation* et des persécuteurs...	... God of the congregation and the preachers...

Like other inexperienced translators, Lowell placed too much reliance in his French-English dictionary and not enough in his intuition, with results like the following, where his failure to sense the onomatopoetic use of *crin-crin* led to an amusing blunder:

SAINTE-BEUVE	LOWELL
Béranger... a donné le refrain... aux attaques et moqueries anti-religieuses de (Voltaire); il les a rendues chantantes avec le *crin-crin* de son archet.	Béranger... gave a refrain... to the anti-clerical attacks and mockeries of Voltaire; he set them to his violin and made them sing with the horsehair of his bow.

We have no idea whether Sainte-Beuve was unhappy over the way his article was tranformed into English (a doubtful assumption, since his knowledge of our language was not nearly so good as Lowell imagined) or whether he was dissatisfied with the honorarium that was sent him. The fact remains that his first contribution to the *Atlantic* seems to have been his last. He did not send Lowell the suggested essay on Rachel, nor do the two men seem to have corresponded further.

University of Wisconsin

OSCAR MANDEL

Molière and Turgenev: The Literature of No-Judgment

IN TERMS of drama and psychological interest, no excuses need to be made by an admirer of Turgenev for the presence of Arkady's uncle, Pavel Petrovich Kirsanov, in *Fathers and Sons*. But his role is more questionable in terms of the philosophical or thematic structure of the novel. If, roughly speaking, Turgenev meant to contrast past with present, tradition with revolution, romanticism with realism, he did what needed to be done by confronting the two fathers, Arkady's and Bazarov's, with their sons. Why did he add the uncle as a kind of fifth wheel to the carriage?

The question seems trifling—a novel is not an exercise in geometry—yet by examining this fifth personage and straying with him into the novel, we may discover by the way a clue to one of the few enigmatic works of art of the French classical period, Molière's *Misanthrope*. The two works seem to bear no relation whatever to each other; yet, because similar "laws" may rule creations far removed in time and space, and because the operation of archetypes obeys no boundaries, one work may well elucidate another without any suggestion of actual literary influence.[1]

[1] A great deal of material—indeed, most of the material—concerning Turgenev is unavailable in translation. It is a question, therefore, whether a critic who does not read Russian is competent to speak on Turgenev. To invoke precedent may be thought a feeble excuse, since it is merely discovering partners in guilt. I shall only plead that I deal with certain internal questions which are, perhaps, independent of Russian scholarship, independent even of Turgenev's intentions as these may be expressed in his correspondence, and which require chiefly that the text of the novel be accurately translated. Still, I have had to proceed without knowing the opinions of generations of Russian critics. Part of this essay is therefore presented as a modest attempt, subject to correction.

To the problem of Pavel's role in *Fathers and Sons* (1862), one answer, clearly, is that Turgenev uses him to exhibit a particular aspect of the past. It is approximately true that, while Nikolai Petrovich embodies the poetry, or soul, of the past, his brother Pavel illustrates its manners, or surface. Nikolai loves nature, quotes poetry, and plays the cello as an optimistic if apologetic romanticist. But Turgenev is far indeed from mocking his tenderness. All Nikolai does is dictated by love, and he loves as naturally as he breathes. Pavel, on the other hand, is the picture of affectation. Dressing with foppish elegance on the poverty-stricken farm, imitating the English dandyism he admires, feeding on his memories of the great world in which he had played an exquisitely romantic role, he decays delicately and consciously as a dry, sterile, and useless relic. He is indifferent to nature, poetry, and music, while love for him, instead of being procreative, takes the form of a ludicrous chivalrous gesture—a duel fought for the sake of a peasant girl, his brother's concubine, for whom he sighs in secret.

From all this we might conclude that Turgenev is drawing the "good" and the "bad" aspects of the past: on the one hand, a genuine romanticism, benevolent and unaffected, on the other, the barren artifices of the obsolescent aristocratic system. Bazarov despises the illusions of the one as much as the unreality of the other, and opposes his own scientific realism to both—a realism under whose scalpel both the sentiments and the manners, the soul and the politics, of the past disintegrate. Still, even he distinguishes between Nikolai and Pavel; and the reader too is led to make a difference—to accept Nikolai (certainly, at least, to love him) and to expect in Pavel an antagonist, or even an old-fashioned villain.

But Turgenev surprises us. Pavel discovers the hated Bazarov kissing Fenitchka in the garden. He secretly challenges him to a duel and is wounded in the leg. During his convalescence, he calls Fenitchka to his bedside (Chapter 24). We expect the worst, for this cold, embittered, and lonely man has been hovering about the girl in as sinister a fashion as Turgenev can contrive. Her unspoken horror of him has reminded us, perhaps, of Margaret's instinctive loathing of Mephisto. Yet, instead of blackmailing or terrorizing the girl, Pavel behaves like a knight. He tells Fenitchka that he saw the scene in the arbor. But he begs her to be faithful to his brother.

"Fenitchka!" he was saying in a strange whisper; "love him, love my brother! Don't give him up for any one in the world; don't listen to any one else! Think what can be more terrible than to love and not be loved! Never leave my poor Nikolai!"[2]

[2] Quotations are from the Modern Library edition. The translator is Constance Garnett.

And finally he calls on his more-than-willing brother to marry her.

It appears, then, that Pavel did not fight Bazarov in a simple fit of jealousy, nor did he intend to seduce the girl himself. Quite the contrary, regardless of whether or not Bazarov had existed, Pavel would never have uttered what used to be called an indelicate word to Fenitchka as long as he lived. His code demanded secrecy, and indeed at the end of the novel he carries "his suffering heart" away to Dresden, masking himself in dandyism, and presumably dreaming still of the resemblance between the humble Fenitchka and the magnificent princess for whose sake he had ruined himself. Thus, he is revealed to us without sarcasm as a good man in his crumbled fashion who returns his brother's love with an action which is, in its context, magnificent. He is not the opposite of his brother at all. He too is genuine; he too loves.

What is the significance of Turgenev's sympathetic treatment of a character who seemed such an easy target for satire or hatred? Simply this: Pavel makes it impossible for us to take sides between the fathers —the past—and the sons—the present. The surprising rehabilitation of the antagonist, hence of that which he represents, leaves us with the scales even. Already in *On the Eve* (1860) Turgenev had demolished the aristocratic father of Elena only to redeem him in a later pathetic scene; and in his first novel, *Rudin* (1855), he had concluded his exposé of the main personage with a partial rehabilitation. There was in Turgenev a kind of will to sympathy which made him loth to stop at the obvious vices of his creatures. His novels invariably probe—and often probe convincingly—until they find roots of goodness, however thin.

His contemporaries recognized this desire to sympathize with all sides and its obvious relation to his temperamental inability to commit himself to the extremity of an action, a decision, a stand.[3] Turgenev had the tolerance of the true pessimist, who believes, conveniently perhaps, that all is "smoke."[4] This does not mean, of course, that he was indiscriminately tolerant. In *Fathers and Sons* he satirizes certain minor characters—the pseudo-liberal official, the pseudo-emancipated footman, the pseudo-intellectual hanger-on, and the pseudo-educated female. Yet, had any of these been major characters, he would no doubt have found them out in kindness too.

The ability, on the part of an urbane artist, to see the merits of

[3] Prosper Mérimée speaks of his "soin . . . à rechercher le bien partout où il se cache," in "Ivan Tourguéneff," *Portraits historiques et littéraires* (Paris, n.d.), p. 356; and Henry James, though he was hardly an intimate of Turgenev, voices a common opinion when he speaks of "a certain expansive softness, a comprehensive indecision which pervaded his nature" in *Partial Portraits* (London, 1919), p. 295.

[4] See the famous passage on this subject in Chap. 25 of *Smoke*.

opposite viewpoints is hardly a new one. Homer was not insensitive to Hector's virtues, nor Sophocles to the rights of Creon in the *Antigone*. Nevertheless, they left no doubt about their own ultimate commitment. The crucial fact in *Fathers and Sons* is that Turgenev offers no judgment whatsoever. Having expounded the character and actions of Bazarov on the one hand, and of Nikolai and Pavel on the other, he leaves the issue between them undecided. We may wish to join the ruthless realist or the kindly sentimentalist, but we must do this on our own account; the text is mute, it does not pronounce. This does not mean that *Fathers and Sons* transcends old-fashioned ethical questions; it raises them with some emotion, but it leaves them unsettled.

Was it Flaubert who taught Turgenev, with *Madame Bovary*, the art of not judging, the art of pure investigation? True, Flaubert travels from the seemingly innocent to the actually corrupt, whereas Turgenev, as we have seen, reverses the procedure; but both refuse a verdict even when their cases cry out for one. Shall we partly condone Emma Bovary, and see in her idealism something that might have been beautiful had not the world put its dirty hand on it, or shall we interpret it as radically stupid? Is Charles of a lower or a higher species than Emma, or are they worthy of each other? If we presume to answer these questions—and the novel poses them—we do so by imposing an extratextual, private ethic on the raw data of the novel. In fact, we probably transgress our privilege. Authors who do not point toward a judgment mean us not to judge within their work. We are to shudder and to admire, to approve and to disapprove from episode to episode, to applaud the skill of the investigation and to feel our knowledge expand; but, the moment we conclude, we cease to read the novel; we *use* it.

Thus the technique of no-judgment, whether it is applied to single characters or to issues and conflicts among them, appears quite distinct from the traditional technique of the flawed hero or the villain with redeeming traits. In *Rudin*, for example, we waver between hostility and pity, but we know at every point which of these emotions is the "official" one dictated to us by the author, and we are given a final auditing of the account. *Smoke* (1867) views both Slavophils and Westernizers with sympathy, yet leans toward the latter. And by what means? Crude editorializing is a possibility, and Turgenev is not above using it in some of his novels.[5] But an author commands three other techniques: putting the character in a right or a wrong so obvious that all readers will recognize it; giving one of the contenders a change of heart; or creating a character who can be quickly identified as the

[5] See, for example, his characterization of Panshin in *A House of Gentlefolk* (London, 1904), p. 18.

author's mouthpiece. Turgenev used the last method in his earlier novels. But in *Fathers and Sons* no independent spokesman appears; neither contender yields his position; and no one is either a fool or a villain. Flaubert achieved a similar effect by making *all* his characters fools and villains, without arbiter in between. Both authors were innovators, and both, as we know, were exposed to misunderstanding and calumny as a result. "It was," Turgenev wrote in 1869, "a new method as well as a new type I introduced—that of Realizing instead of Idealizing... The reader is easily thrown into perplexity when the author does not show clear sympathy or antipathy to his own child."[6]

These reflections lead us, however odd the juxtaposition may seem, to a reconsideration of Molière's *Misanthrope* (1666). There are, in fact, vital analogies between Turgenev's and Molière's masterpieces.

Where *Fathers and Sons* resembles *Le Misanthrope* most pointedly is in the kinship between Bazarov and Alceste. It may be objected that, in contrast to Alceste, Bazarov is a misanthrope with a metaphysic.[7] But, if we miss the philosophical dimension in Alceste, we must take into account the severe limits imposed on the French artist's scope in the seventeenth century. The writer of the golden age could not allow himself odd opinions concerning the destiny of man, religion, or political organization.[8] He created memorable works under intellectual conditions which would have suffocated Ben Jonson or a twentieth-century writer. Molière might venture to ridicule bluestockings, misers, doctors, or tyrannical fathers. But the storm stirred up by his tentative jabs at bigots and religious hypocrites showed that this was going too far. No one except a Jansenist would dream of disputing with Louis XIV about the fundamental questions of God, man, and society; and, in general, our impression is that few writers wished to do so. Molière showed in *Dom Juan* that he had both the desire and the ability to pose such questions. The play, however, is full of quirks, inconsistencies, darts, retreats, and daring screened by farce. It was hurried off the stage almost as soon as it appeared. That Alceste's complaints against humanity, compared with Bazarov's, are thin and "private" follows from the spirit of the times.

It should also be noted that Turgenev wrote against the background

[6] Quoted, among other places, in E. Garnett, *Turgenev, A Study* (London, 1917), p. 113. It should be noted, however, that Turgenev more than once expressed in his letters his sympathy for Bazarov and his ideas.

[7] An earlier misanthrope is Pigasov, in *Rudin*, who wins a lawsuit and complains that "it deprives him of the right—the precious right—of complaining and cursing Providence." Alceste enjoys and relishes that right by losing his case.

[8] This is well discussed in Auerbach's *Mimesis*, in the chapter "Le Faux Dévot."

of the romantic revolution, which had taught artists to be seers rather than entertainers. It was hard for a writer of the nineteenth century, as it is still hard today, to evade this promotion. In *Fathers and Sons* Turgenev made a most determined effort to attain a level of philosophy and social comment. In this, however, he did not entirely succeed; a close look reveals that Bazarov is not primarily or essentially the spokesman of materialism, positivism, and atheism. He is undeniably a nihilist. But he is above all a fanatic. Turgenev (in his own opinion) created a character rather than an embodied philosophical or political viewpoint.[9] It is not entirely his fault that his contemporaries neglected the tragicomedy of the extremist to fasten on the question whether Turgenev had been fair to positivism.

I do not wish to deny the dramatic importance of Bazarov's theories. Turgenev succeeds to a certain degree in turning philosophy from conversation into motive and action; Bazarov's abuse of his hosts, his uneasy coolness toward his parents, his break with Arkady, and above all his reluctance to fall in love are all likely if not necessary psychological consequences of his positivism. But the duel with Pavel, Anna's decisive rejection of Bazarov, and his death do not depend on his doctrine as, say, Alceste's loss of the lawsuit depends on his. What is more significant, Bazarov's field of action is no broader than that of Alceste; he is a character of sociological or philosophical fiction misaddressed to a novel of manners. In short, he is too big for his setting (as is Insarov in *On the Eve*). We long to see him act out his theories in the "great world," but he dies before he can put Turgenev to that trouble. *Crime and Punishment* is the tragedy of a philosophy, but *Fathers and Sons*, lacking a suitable action, cannot be the tragedy of positivism; it is memorable, instead, as the character study of a man whose intransigeant demand for reality, whose inability to compromise, condemns him to be a solitary, bitter alien in his own world. The dramatic light falls on the intransigeance rather than on the sociophilosophical thesis which it informs. Here Bazarov and Alceste, despite the difference in philosophical scope, join each other as misanthropes. And they turn out to have more than this one resemblance.[10]

[9] "I never attempted to 'create a character' unless I had for my departing point not an idea but a living person to whom the appropriate elements [i.e., the philosophical principles] were later on gradually attached." Quoted in a section of Turgenev's *Literary Reminiscences* reprinted in *Partisan Review*, XXV (1958), 265.

[10] Critics have overemphasized the sociopolitical element in Turgenev's work. True, his involvement in sociopolitical questions led him to force them in bulk into all his novels; but he was above all—in fact, exclusively—a poet of the human character. His personages discuss "issues" at length, but the issues are seldom a significant element in the central drama, whose real issue is love, and whose

Both have a horror of the conventional euphemism and a direct way of expressing home truths which makes even their friends shudder. When Bazarov and Arkady are visiting Bazarov's parents (Chapter 21), Arkady makes a comment about the fall of a maple leaf—the kind of romantic observation which needles Bazarov as sugared compliments upset Alceste.

"Oh, my friend, Arkady Nikolaitch!" cried Bazarov, "one thing I entreat of you; no fine talk."

"I talk as best I can... And I declare, it's perfect despotism. An idea comes into my head; why shouldn't I utter it?"

"Yes; and why shouldn't I utter my ideas? I think that fine talk's positively indecent."

"And what is decent? Abuse?"

"Ha! ha! you really do intend, I see, to walk in your uncle's footsteps. How pleased that worthy imbecile would have been if he had heard you!"

"What did you call Pavel Petrovitch?"

"I called him, very justly, an imbecile."

"But this is unbearable!" cried Arkady.

"Aha! family feeling spoke there," Bazarov commented coolly. "I've noticed how obstinately it sticks to people. A man's ready to give up everything and break with every prejudice; but to admit that his brother, for instance, who steals handkerchiefs, is a thief—that's too much for him..."

Compare this with the tone of the opening scene in Molière, where Philinte's conventional courtesies correspond to Arkady's "fine talk":

PHILINTE
Qu'est-ce donc? qu'avez-vous
ALCESTE
Laissez-moi, je vous prie.
PHILINTE
Mais encor dites-moi quelle bizarrerie...
ALCESTE
Laissez-moi là, vous dis-je, et courez vous cacher.
PHILINTE
Mais on entend les gens, au moins, sans se fâcher.
ALCESTE
Moi, je veux me fâcher, et ne veux point entendre.
PHILINTE
Dans vos brusques chagrins je ne puis vous comprendre,
Et quoique amis enfin, je suis tout des premiers...

---

deepest meaning is the apolitical one of metaphysical vanity. The sense of futility, uselessness, and superfluity appears both in the personal drama and in the political enterprises of the novels; but Irving Howe, in his notable "Turgenev: The Virtues of Hesitation," *Hudson Review*, VIII (1956), 540, errs, I think, when he states that the two levels are indistinguishable in the best novels. This is at best true only of *Virgin Soil*; elsewhere Turgenev fails to integrate the sociopolitical themes into the dramatic stuff of his work.

ALCESTE

Je vous vois accabler un homme de caresses,
Et témoigner pour lui les dernières tendresses...
Et quand je vous demande après quel est cet homme,
A peine pouvez-vous dire comme il se nomme...

and with the famous quarrel with the poetaster Oronte, who, like Arkady and Pavel, cannot bear the crude truth: "What is the matter with my sonnet?" cries Oronte. "Frankly," replies Alceste, who hardly knows him, "it's fit for the closet."

Bazarov is as ready to drop Arkady as Alceste is willing to send Philinte to the devil:

"... A sentimentalist would say, 'I feel that our paths are beginning to part.' But I will simply say that we're tired of each other."

"Yevgeny..."

"My dear soul, there's no great harm in that. One gets tired of much more than that in this life. And now I suppose we'd better say good-bye, hadn't we?..." [Chapter 25].

And Alceste:

Moi, votre ami? Rayez cela de vos papiers.
J'ai fait jusques ici profession de l'être...

PHILINTE

Je suis donc bien coupable, Alceste, à votre compte?
(I, i)

Bazarov does not reserve his implacable honesty for his friends. He is as rude to his host Nikolai as he is to Arkady, his own father, or Sitnikov. Nikolai apologizes after the duel, though he does not know its true motive (Chapter 24):

"My brother is a man of the old school, hot-tempered and obstinate... Thank God that it has ended as it has. I have taken every precaution to avoid publicity."

"I'm leaving you my address, in case there's any fuss," Bazarov remarked casually.

"I hope there will be no fuss, Yevgeny Vassilyitch... I am very sorry your stay in this house should have such a... such an end. It is the more distressing to me through Arkady's..."

"I shall be seeing him, I expect," replied Bazarov, in whom 'explanations' and 'protestations' of every sort always aroused a feeling of impatience; "in case I don't, I beg you to say good-bye to him for me, and accept the expression of my regret." [Like Alceste, Bazarov is willing to dispense a scratchy minimum of courtesy.]

"And I beg..." answered Nikolai Petrovitch. But Bazarov went off without waiting for the end of his sentence.

Compare this with Alceste's

Et je ne hais rien tant que les contorsions
De tous ces grands faiseurs de protestations,
(I, i)

and with his curt behavior in general, for example to Arsinoé, whom he invites to mind her own business:

> ... Laissez-moi, Madame, je vous prie,
> Vider mes intérêts moi-mème là-dessus,
> Et ne vous chargez point de ces soins superflus.
> (V, iv)

Alceste's typical mood is anger, and anger is also the usual temper in which we find Bazarov. The passages quoted resemble each other not in content, of course, but in psychological intention. The two men do not hate exactly the same vices—one loathes hypocrisy and the other "all romantic, nonsensical, aesthetic rot"—but they both hate what is behind these vices, namely sham; and they hate mankind for not hating it too: "Tous les hommes me sont à tel point odieux, / Que je serois fâché d'être sage à leurs yeux" (I, i); "Whatever charges you make against a man, you may be certain he deserves twenty times worse than that in reality" (Chapter 21).

Implacable honesty forms the strongest link between Bazarov and Alceste, but by no means the only one. Both stumble in the end for exactly the same reason; they fail to carry out their own principles to the bitter end. And both fail because they fall in love. This fatal inconsistency is their comic flaw. If Alceste had applied his misanthropy to Célimène as he does to everyone else, he could not have suffered his defeat. What is more, he is perfectly aware of his inconsistency, and hates himself for it. But passion is stronger than reason, as the French classicists are never tired of pointing out, and as Alceste says himself: "La raison n'est pas ce qui règle l'amour." His self-censure breaks out more than once.

> ... Morbleu! faut-il que je vous aime?
> Ah! que si de vos mains je rattrape mon cœur,
> Je bénirai le Ciel de ce rare bonheur!
> Je ne le cèle pas, je fais tout mon possible
> A rompre de ce cœur l'attachement terrible;
> Mais mes plus grands efforts n'ont rien fait jusqu'ici,
> Et c'est pour mes péchés que je vous aime ainsi.
> (II, i)

And in the last act he refers to his own "indigne tendresse."

Bazarov follows the same course. At the beginning he despises Pavel for having allowed himself to be ruined by a woman: "I must say that a fellow who stakes his whole life on one card—a woman's love—and when that card fails, turns sour, and lets himself go till he's fit for nothing, is not a man, but a male" (Chapter 7). Love, to Bazarov, is a

sentimental absurdity. Only lust, the biological fact, is real, and so he affects to treat all women as female bodies. Love is an error, since it exalts one member of the species over another when in fact all the organisms of a species are equivalent:

> "All people are like one another, in the soul as in body; each of us has a brain, spleen, heart and lungs made alike; and the so-called moral qualities are the same in all; the slight variations are of no importance. A single human specimen is sufficient to judge of all by. People are like trees in a forest; no botanist would think of studying each individual birch-tree" [Chapter 16].

When Bazarov succumbs to the indolent charms of Anna Sergyevna Odintsov, he rivals Alceste in self-loathing:

> In his conversations with Anna Sergyevna he expressed more strongly than ever his calm contempt for everything idealistic; but when he was alone, with indignation he recognized idealism in himself.[11] Then he would set off to the forest and walk with long strides about it, smashing the twigs that came in his way, and cursing under his breath both her and himself [Chapter 17].

Neither Alceste nor Bazarov have the right to give way to love for a human being. Both are spurned in the end, and both retire to the "desert" broken and still angry with themselves and the world. They are defeated by the very emotion they despise. And both are deeply unhappy, humorless men.

While the reader may feel that Alceste and Bazarov misunderstand the nature of human artifices, he cannot dismiss their misanthropy as baseless. Both authors (Molière more decisively) prove that their "heroes" have something to fret about—in Molière a world peopled by malicious flirts, fops, venal judges, false prudes, and toadies (as evil a world as an artist in Molière's position could allow himself to draw); in Turgenev a system surviving on sentimental delusions concerning tradition, the dignity of man, eternal values, and the like, while the peasantry starves. Alceste and Bazarov may be wrong, but they are not entirely wrong. Or they may be right, but not entirely right. As we have seen, Turgenev does not judge or conclude—and, shunning the obvious method of providing his protagonist with a foil, not only justifies to some extent the supposed foil but casts serious doubts on the protagonist as well.

Let us now consider whether *Fathers and Sons* provides a clue for the solution of the mystery of the *Misanthrope*. That the play is enigmatic has always been recognized. From the time of its first performances, the question of who is Molière's spokesman divided opinion.

[11] We must understand that "idealism" in Bazarov's language is synonymous with illusion. Bazarov himself is an idealist in another sense—in that, like Alceste, he longs for the unconditional.

Donneau de Visée, in the well-known "Lettre" which precedes the first printed edition, states that the *Misanthrope* is "a play in which Molière wishes to speak against the mores of the time and spare nobody." This seems to favor Alceste; yet a few pages later he refers to Philinte as a man so reasonable that all should imitate him, and Alceste as one who teaches us how to correct ourselves. In short, de Visée liked both Alceste and Philinte. Robinet, on the other hand, admired Alceste:

> Aucune morale chrétienne
> N'est plus louable que la sienne.

The issue was quickly drawn. This is not the place to survey the history of the controversy.[12] It is enough to say that the nineteenth century tended to see in Alceste a praiseworthy man, if crotchety, while to the twentieth century he has seemed in general a crotchety man, if praiseworthy. But these are only the temperate opinions. Less temperately, Alceste has been seen as the tragic rebel against society, the precursor of the Revolution, the lonely hero—and as an arrogant and even a sick man, brutal, choleric, vindictive, stubborn, and disproportionate.[13] We are also told that Molière condemned both characters, and finally, in Mr. Turnell's words, that he has been "particularly careful to avoid the appearance of imposing a solution."[14]

The role which Philinte plays has naturally been interpreted as a complement to that of Alceste. Philinte has either the true (that is to say the author's) point of view or he is another example of the smooth-talking hypocrisy of the world. Or he is as wrong on his side as Alceste is on the other, while the ideal falls in between:

> La parfaite raison fuit toute extrémité,
> Et veut que l'on soit sage avec sobriété.
> (I, i)

The difficulty with any one of these positions, except that of Mr. Turnell, is not that evidence is hard to find for it, but rather that it is impossible to dismiss contradictory evidence. The evidence, both internal and external, is insistently ambiguous. According to one common

[12] See G. Michaut, *Les Luttes de Molière* (Paris, 1925) for the standard summary.

[13] Mauriac: "Dans un monde où l'injustice surabonde et où le crime est partout, il ne se gendarme que contre le fretin." *Journal* (Paris, 1937), II, 142. Mauriac forgets that, as we have seen, a servant of Louis XIV was in no position to rage against real crimes. See G. du Boulan, *L'Enigme d'Alceste* for an extreme pro-Alceste view in the nineteenth century, and R. Jasinski, *Molière et le Misanthrope* (Paris, 1951), for the typical modern stand against Alceste.

[14] *The Classical Moment: Studies of Corneille, Molière and Racine* (New York, 1946), p. 120.

argument, it is absurd to suppose that Molière should suddenly have given up his well-known moderate, Horatian, Montaigne-like view of the world, so well attested in his other plays. Is it not his universal pattern to scourge the eccentric by means of the normal? But W. G. Moore, in his *Molière, a New Criticism* (Oxford, 1949), avers that the norm never represented Molière in the first place, but simply the view of the average spectator. Molière, the man who left the cozy employment of his father to wander along the roads of France, Molière the man who married his mistress' daughter (she was even suspected of being his own), Molière the translator of Lucretius and the known *libertin*, could hardly, according to this view, be thought to share the dull moderation of his safe and sane characters.

Be that as it may, there is still nothing to prevent us from assuming that Molière, in this play, turned against the very norm he had upheld in the past, perhaps because of the troubles he was enduring at the time—troubles professional, over *Tartuffe* and *Dom Juan*, and troubles conjugal, with his frivolous Armande, who incidentally is often identified with Célimène. Furthermore—and this needs emphasis—Molière appears, like Shakespeare, to have had a "dark" middle period, a period which includes *Tartuffe* (first version, 1664), *Dom Juan* (1665), *Le Misanthrope* (1666), and that bitterest of farces, *George Dandin* (1668). *Dom Juan* is as enigmatic as the *Misanthrope*, and casts serious doubts on the norm—while in *George Dandin* the norm does not exist at all, and a fool is arrayed against a set of knaves.

It is therefore no help at all to call on Molière's accredited normalcy to solve the problem of the *Misanthrope*. But another road can be taken. In a series of plays preceding the *Misanthrope—L'École des maris* (1662), *L'École des femmes* (1662), and *Tartuffe*—Molière repeatedly foreshadows the character and opinions of Alceste. In each play, he presents a party opposed to the pleasures of the *beau monde* and a party in favor of amusements and trifles. Sganarelle and Arnolphe are mistrustful grouches who want their women to stay at home in the old-fashioned way to devote themselves to mending their husbands' shirts. In *Tartuffe*, the opposition to the gay life takes the form of bigotry, embodied in Orgon and his mother. And it is noteworthy that Philinte draws the parallel and identifies Alceste with Sganarelle (I, i). In the earlier plays, the point of view is never in doubt. The sulks are wrong and the merry people are right. The good Ariste in *L'École des maris* anticipates Philinte: "Toujours au plus grand nombre on doit s'accomoder" (I, i). His way of raising his ward summarizes Molière's position at that period:

J'ai souffert qu'elle ait vu les belles compagnies,
Les divertissements, les bals, les comédies;
Ce sont choses, pour moi, que je tiens de tout temps
Fort propres à former l'esprit des jeunes gens.
(I, ii)

Though he is practically advocating that his ward Léonor should become another Célimène, he is beyond any doubt Molière's spokesman. Sganarelle, the jealous kill-joy, on the other hand wants to retire to the country with Isabelle: "Nous prétendons / Lui faire aller revoir nos choux et nos dindons" (I, ii). Is it not plausible, therefore, to think of Alceste as the last of a series, another egoist in love, another foe of innocent merriment, another jealous fanatic?[15]

We are still dealing exclusively with external evidence, but it is worth noting that the *choux* and *dindons* of Sganarelle become Alceste's *désert*, which is at any rate a promotion into dignity. The remarkable external fact, however, is precisely that the *Misanthrope* is the last of this series; perhaps, then, it marks a reversal rather than a continuation; perhaps it breaks the series, and perhaps it refutes it. After the *Misanthrope* we shall look in vain for repetitions of Ariste's and Philinte's enthusiastic espousal of conformity. More significant still, Molière does not write another play celebrating in argument the pleasant life of society. Those attractive lovers of amusement in the earlier works—Isabelle, Léonor, Agnès, and Mariane—simply vanish. *George Dandin* is an indictment of these very ladies, seen after marriage rather than as maidens. Social amusements become the craving of a fool in *Le Bourgeois gentilhomme* (1670). The whole issue is absent from the other plays, while Henriette in *Les Femmes savantes* (1672) desires a quiet life with a husband, not the social whirl. Perhaps this is all accidental; Molière may simply have exhausted a comic vein; but the shift does exist, and it undermines the theory that Alceste is explained by Sganarelle and Arnolphe.

We shall not linger over other bits of external evidence, such as the medical lore of the seventeenth century, in accordance with which it is claimed that the *bilious* Alceste must be seen as a madman; the contention that, since Molière allowed de Visée's "Lettre" (contradictory in any case, as we have seen) to stand at the head of the play, it must represent his own views of the play; the suppositions that Oronte's sonnet must have been meant by Molière to be a pretty fair poem,[16]

[15] This is Mornet's opinion in *Hist. de la litt. française classique*, 3rd ed. (Paris, 1947), p. 272.

[16] Two poems in a similar vein, taken from the works of Cotin, a poetaster of the times, are mercilessly whipped in *Les Femmes savantes*.

that retiring from the world appeared to the audience of *la cour et la ville* as the height of absurdity, and that visiting judges was a perfectly normal procedure. On the other side, we shall merely mention that the play seems to belong, with *Tartuffe*, *Dom Juan*, and even *L'Amour médecin* (1665), to a distinct group of works which pillory hypocrites. None of this proves anything, and all of it removes us from the play itself. We must now return to the latter.

It can be shown in a dozen passages that Alceste is a ridiculously atrabilious character. He is impossibly stubborn over trifles; he insults his best friend; and, most damning, he twice offers his heart ignobly to Eliante "on the rebound." He is accused of being ridiculous in the eyes of all men. He shows an extravagant desire to be singled out. His scenes before Célimène are scandalous. He ends, says Jasinski, in a "délire de la persécution." According to Mauriac and Rudler, his sincerity is brutal and leads to war for futile reasons. As for Célimène, Michaut thinks that her *médisances* are, after all, harmless. Philinte, on the other hand, is supremely kind, devoted, self-sacrificing, and intelligent:

> La sagesse de Philinte, sagesse d'épicurien, faite de beaucoup d'expérience et de scepticisme, et d'un peu de mépris des hommes, faite aussi d'indulgence et de bonté réelle, est proprement la sagesse de Molière.[17]

A number of critics suggest that Alceste's hatred of mankind arises from his private lawsuit. With all this support in the text, it is not difficult for actors to play Alceste as they play Arnolphe, Orgon, or even Harpagon—a comic, even a merely comic, figure.

On the opposite side, we see first of all the basic fact that Oronte, Célimène, Arsinoé, the venal judge who never appears on stage, and the two marquis all support by their words and actions Alceste's hatred of the world. Philinte, who is himself good, can advocate a moderate position and compromise only as a *modus vivendi*:

> ... quand on est du monde, il faut bien que l'on rende
> Quelques dehors civils que l'usage demande ...

and

> ... un si grand courroux contre les mœurs du temps
> Vous tourne en ridicule auprès de bien des gens.
> (I, i)

What Philinte does not do anywhere in the play is to urge that Alceste's view of humanity is exaggerated. On the contrary, he agrees with it:

[17] R. Doumic, *Le Misanthrope de Molière* (Paris, n.d.), p. 200. See also Jasinski, p. 155 and *passim*; Rudler's edition of the play (Oxford, 1947), p. xxvi; and Michaut, p. 220.

> . . . je tombe d'accord de tout ce qu'il vous plait :
> Tout marche par cabale et par pur intérêt.
> (V, i)

All he has is expediency, and expediency only if "one is of the world"—*quand on est du monde*. Alceste, of course, wishes not to be of the world, and actually withdraws out of the realm of expediency. And, since it is Philinte, whose own stand is in dispute, who advocates the middle view quoted above (p. 243), the case for those who see in this passage the key to the play is somewhat weakened. Ariste, in *L'École des maris*, advocates conformity almost in Philinte's words, but he likes society. Philinte advocates conformity—despising it as much as does Alceste. Surely the moral difference is significant.

Against those who think that Molière is ridiculing the excesses of Alceste, another witness can be brought forth, namely the mild Éliante, who is a better candidate for the role of spokesman than is Philinte. Her verdict seems unequivocal:

> Et la sincérité dont son âme se pique
> A quelque chose, en soi, de noble et d'héroïque.
> C'est une vertu rare au siècle d'aujourd'hui,
> Et je la voudrais voir partout comme chez lui.
> (IV, i)

And yet, if this is her opinion, why does she not marry Alceste in the end; why does she turn rather to Philinte, as though in vindication of the latter's philosophy?

Further, against the tempting view that the authentic position lies between Alceste and Philinte, it must be argued that, on the contrary, Alceste's fault was that he did not carry his misanthropy far enough. As we have seen, his fall occurs because he makes one exception to his hatred. We do not feel that Arnolphe should have been more tyrannical, but we are forced to admit that Alceste should have been more misanthropic, and cast out Célimène from the beginning along with the rest of the world.

How do we know that Sganarelle, Arnolphe, Orgon, and all the other comic antagonists of Molière are in fact antagonists? The matter has never been in dispute. Molière shows that these characters are mistaken in fact: Sganarelle's and Arnolphe's scheme for bringing up women produces the opposite of what they desired. Orgon was mistaken in Tartuffe. George Dandin repents of his marriage. In addition, Molière provides us with a secure point of view through normal nonparticipants, through servants who speak with the voice of nature or through unmistakable follies like those of the miser, the social climber, and the bluestockings.

Though Michaut cannot understand how Molière could possibly have omitted a spokesman in this play, of all plays, the fact is that he did. Éliante, as we have seen, is equivocal; she admires Alceste but marries Philinte. Philinte's "the world is evil, but let us play along with it" receives no confirmation from the drama. We may think him "supremely intelligent," but only extratextually, for the whole play is an almost tragic confirmation of the grounds of Alceste's withdrawal. Philinte judges Alceste, and Alceste judges Philinte, but who judges either? In the other plays, events judge—Tartuffe and Trissotin turn out to be knaves and Arnolphe a fool. But here the events do not judge. Even the saucy servant, so useful in the other plays, is absent. Alceste is a dupe, and dupes are generally the comic antagonists in Molière—yet not necessarily in this case. We approve of the tricks of Agnès and of Valère in *L'École des maris* and *L'Avare*. But do we approve of Célimène's tricks? Do we find it just and right that Alceste should have been fooled? We note that Célimène, unlike the other tricksters, is herself exposed and abandoned in the end. This is a unique occurrence in Molière. Plainly, Alceste is not in a class with the fools of the other plays. The dramatic structure of the *Misanthrope* is peculiar. For once the trickster does not have our sympathy; the victim of the trick is not exposed as a fool; the normal way is not upheld.[18] Had Molière wanted to satirize the desire to withdraw from a wicked world, surely he would have hit on a better way than the underlining of its wickedness.

We recognize satire when a generally held value (the more obvious the better) is being violated—say our feeling that a man found bleeding on the ground ought to be helped (*Joseph Andrews*), that children should not be eaten (*A Modest Proposal*), or that one ought not to starve horses (*L'Avare*). But whether a man ought to have a *soif d'absolu* or whether he ought to commit the thousand little villainies by which men get along in the world is surely not a question which can receive a simple undisputed answer. Ibsen, for example, wrote plays both to condemn this thirst and to praise it. The craving for sincerity is not, therefore, a subject which satirizes itself; the satire must be demonstrated by events or affirmed by warranted spokesmen. Molière failed or refused to do either. That is why the typical remarks of French critics—like Jasinski's "Il ne dépasse pas le stade injuste de la désil-

[18] Even those who think that Oronte's sonnet is to be accepted as a fair piece of work must recognize that Philinte's effusions over it are in a class with Célimène's gushing welcome of Arsinoé, her worst enemy. Michaut's contention that Philinte is trying to divert Oronte's attention from Alceste is a typical instance of paraliterary interpretation, like Brander Matthews' hope that Célimène and Alceste may yet be reconciled or Jasinski's suggestion that Éliante's love of Alceste is merely pity for his suffering.

lusion" or Gérard du Boulan's opposite "Alceste se transfigure . . . Le solitaire apparaît dans son dépouillement radieux!"—are extratextual impositions derived from private viewpoints. The text does not countenance them. The text supports the opinion of both Alceste and Philinte that the world is a wretched place; but it offers no final judgment between the acceptance of Philinte and the rejection of Alceste.

It looks almost as though Molière had deliberately printed several sets of tracks in the sand to make pursuit impossible. The play ceases to be enigmatic only if we read it, like *Fathers and Sons*, as a pure analysis of two contradictory points of view, revealing, as in Turgenev's novel, the actual consequences of each, but allowing no moral decision. Seen in this light, the *Misanthrope* appears as a true if unconscious precursor of the objective literature of the nineteenth century, anticipating the impartial technique of Flaubert and Turgenev. This is not to say that the moral issues are irrelevant or uninteresting—that our authors use these issues only to create conflicts and tensions and ironies. Far from it. They are passionately interested in the issues, and their works are *concerned*. Novel and play pose a problem which neither resolves—but which continues, after we have taken our aesthetic satisfaction, to demand from us a resolution.

That Turgenev's impartiality in *Fathers and Sons* stemmed in part at least from his own real indecision, his actual sympathy for both sides, we know from his *Literary Reminiscences*.[19] This "personal" interpretation of his technique is tempting because he does not seem to use a similar technique in his other novels. For the same reason—the peculiarity of the *Misanthrope* in Molière's canon—it is not idle guessing to suppose that Molière too found himself, temporarily at any rate, in an emotional quandary. On the one hand, he had his success and the unequivocal support of the king, not to mention the Montaigne-like homely common-sense point of view which he adopted, surely not without temperamental sanction, in nearly all his plays. On the other hand, he was exposed to vicious attacks on his person, his doctrine, and his plays; he was suffering from ill health; and he was probably afflicted by domestic troubles. Whatever the reason—let it be mere clumsiness or inadvertence, for that matter—the resulting work has the prophetic greatness of being, not indifferent, but modestly inconclusive.

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[19] *Partisan Review*, XXV, 268. Nevertheless, Turgenev also claimed for himself the ability to put his own opinions into the mouths of unsympathetic characters and vice versa.

WALTER A. STRAUSS

Dante's Belacqua and Beckett's Tramps

IN THE opening cantos of Dante's *Purgatorio* the pilgrim, escorted by Virgil, finds himself climbing a steep mountain before he arrives at the gates of Purgatory proper. This Antepurgatory is a preparation for the ordeals to come, when the pilgrim is ready to climb the seven terraces of the mountain. The mood of the Antepurgatory is one of helplessness, nostalgia, and yearning: the souls encountered here have not sufficiently shuffled off their mortal coils; they move in an atmosphere of unfamiliarity, in which their earthly experience can no longer serve as a point of orientation and in which the bearings of the new country cannot yet be taken. In brief, they lack the insight and the vision that will come to them only after their entry into Purgatory. The mood is admirably caught by Dante in these lines:

> Noi andavam per lo solingo piano
> com'om che torna a la perduta strada,
> che 'nfino ad essa li pare ire invano.
> (I, 118-120)

"Their plight," comments Francis Fergusson, "is . . . like that of every child or young person who has not yet found himself in his world."[1] Like the child, the soul in Antepurgatory loses itself in play or in aimless dawdling: the will is not functioning, because it has no discernible goal and is coaxed forward only by a vague expectation, by hope; the soul's attention is distracted by idle entertainments, or it is dissipated by idle waiting. When in Canto II Casella intones a song, the spirits gather around him and find oblivion in the exquisiteness of the music:

> Lo mio maestro e io e quella gente
> ch'eran con lui parevan sì contenti

[1] *Dante's Drama of the Mind* (Princeton, 1953), p. 15.

Come a nessun toccasse altro la mente.
(II, 115-117)

This unmindfulness and temporary oblivion is, as Professor Fergusson reminds us, analogous to certain twilight moods in Chekhov's plays (such as *The Cherry Orchard*), interpolating a sentimental intermezzo into the lives of groups for whom reality is too difficult to face. Here too, as in Dante, the mind wanders back to childhood reminiscences; the will plays truant to its objectives and relapses into playfulness.

In Canto IV, 106-135, the pilgrim holds converse with Belacqua, who, along with other souls who postponed repentance through laziness, is forced to wait to be admitted to Purgatory for a period equal to his lifetime on earth. All the negligent souls are resting in the shadow of a large rock; Belacqua has assumed something like a fetal position:

Sedeva e abbracciava le ginocchia,
Tenendo il viso giù tra esse basso.

Yet, despite the pathos of his condition, Belacqua is a comic figure, a wiseacre who mildly taunts the pilgrim. When Dante asks Virgil what sort of person could possibly appear so constitutionally lazy ("se pigrizia fosse sua serocchia"), Belacqua raises his head slightly and quips, "Or va tu su, che se' valente." At this point Dante recognizes him as his old Florentine friend and goes up to him,

e poscia
C'a lui fu' giunto, alzò la testa a pena,
Dicendo: "Hai ben veduto come il sole
Da l'omero sinistro il carro mena?"
Li atti suoi pigri e le corte parole
Mosson le labbra mie un poco a riso.

The gibes, the hunched position, the resignation to long waiting merely conceal the pathos of the soul in idle expectation as it withdraws, unmotivated, into its own lethargy. The spirits move through Antepurgatory "Come gente . . . / Che va col cuore e col corpo dimora" (II, 12), but Belacqua's heart is not moving on; resigned, it marks time.

Samuel Beckett's fascination—even obsession—with Belacqua points up the relevance of the theme of expectancy to the modern spiritual dilemma and at the same time underscores the despair of the modern sensibility in the fact of it. Dante's Belacqua is bound to wait out the duration of his lifetime in the shadow of the rock; Beckett's characters do not even have that much certitude about their spiritual destination, and thus are left in a state of complete disorientation.

This particular sense of man's helplessness in the face of the universe that characterizes Beckett's entire work has led observers to place him

in the lineage of Kafka. But Beckett represents a step beyond Kafka; Kafka is intent on affirming his self in relation to an unseen God; in Beckett the self is in the process of disintegration. The hero in Kafka desperately seeks his God. The waifs in Beckett no longer have a God to seek, not even to wait for; they simply wait for something, because waiting is the only mode of existence possible to them. It is in precisely this resignation to eternal waiting that Beckett's derelicts resemble Dante's Belacqua (who waits in eternity, but not eternally).

Beckett's preoccupation and fascination with Purgatory and with Belacqua is already evident in his early writings. In an essay that appeared in 1929 defending James Joyce's *Work in Progress* (later to be known as *Finnegans Wake*) Beckett contrasts Joyce's and Dante's purgatories.

> Dante's is conical ond consequently implies culmination. Mr. Joyce's is spherical and excludes culmination. In the one there is an ascent from real vegetation—Antepurgatory, to ideal vegetation—Terrestrial Paradise: in the other there is no ascent and no ideal vegetation. In the one, absolute profession and a guaranteed consummation: in the other flux—progression or retrogression, and an apparent consummation. In the one movement is unidirectional, and a step forward represents a net advance; in the other movement is non-directional—or multi-directional, and a step forward is, by definition, a step back.

These observations are prophetic of Beckett's work to come. He was to become the poet of vegetation (and here, too, he is different from Kafka, who is the poet of frustration), and he was to chart the path of nondirectional progress. But why does Joyce's purgatory differ from the Purgatory of the "divine comic Denti Alligator" (as Joyce called him)? Because in Joyce—read "Beckett"—there is the "absolute absence of the Absolute." Inferno is the realm of static viciousness, Paradise the realm of static virtue. Purgatory is a "flood of movement and vitality released by the conjunction of these two elements. There is a continual purgatorial process at work, in the sense that the vicious circle of humanity is being achieved." And so the earth is the real purgatory, where vice and virtue interact in such a way that they provide a continuous set of stimuli to enable life to go on, "to enable the kitten to catch its tail."[2]

It is not surprising that a year after this Joyce essay Beckett should be taking the measurements of his own purgatory. The setting is Joycean, the allusions are Dantesque, and the tension between Dante's world and the modern round of life provides the theme of "Dante and the Lobster," the first story in the collection entitled *More Pricks Than*

[2] "Dante . . . Bruno . . . Vico . . . Joyce," *Our Exagmination round his factification for incamination of Work in Progress* (London, 1929), pp. 21-22.

Kicks. The central character of these stories is a modest and lonesome inhabitant of Dublin named Belacqua. "Dante and the Lobster" revolves around several commonplace occurrences in Belacqua's day (again a Joycean motif), culminating in a brief but significant allusion to Dante's "rare movements of compassion in Hell," with a quotation from the *Inferno*, "Qui vive la pietà quando è ben morta" (XX, 28); and Belacqua subsequently muses upon the ambiguity of the word *pietà*: "Why not piety and pity both, even down below? Why not mercy and Godliness together?"[3]

In the novel *Murphy*, written eight years later, the figure of Dante's Belacqua becomes the central preoccupation of the hero:

> At this moment Murphy would willingly have waived his expectation of antepurgatory for five minutes in his chair, renounced the lee of Belacqua's rock and his embryonal repose, looking down at dawn across the reeds to the trembling of the austral sea and the sun obliquing to the north as it rose, immune from expiation until he should have dreamed it all through again, with the downright dreaming of an infant, from the spermarium to the crematorium. He thought so highly of his postmortem situation, its advantages were present in such detail to his mind, that he actually hoped he might live to be old. Then he would have a long time lying there dreaming, watching the dayspring run through its zodiac, before the toil up hill to Paradise. The gradient was outrageous, one in less than one...
>
> This was his Belacqua fantasy and perhaps the most highly systematized of the whole collection. It belonged to those that lay just beyond the frontiers of suffering, it was the first landscape of freedom.[4]

What is interesting in this assimilation of Belacqua by Murphy is Beckett's emphasis on the "embryonal repose" (suggested, of course, by Dante's description of Belacqua's posture),[5] the assumption that Belacqua while waiting is recapitulating his life as in a dream, and that in this experience of timelessness time is given some sort of significance and longevity even becomes desirable.

In a curious chapter of the same book entitled mockingly "Amor intellectualis quo Murphy se ipsum amat" the topic of discussion (as implied by the title) echoes Spinoza's doctrine of mind-body parallelism. Murphy's mind contains three zones—light, half-light, and dark. The first of these is a "radiant abstract of the dog's life... here the kick that the physical Murphy received, the mental Murphy gave. It was the same kick, but corrected as to direction." The second is the zone of contemplation, of the Belacqua bliss, in which Murphy is free to move "from one unparalleled beatitude to another." The dark zone is a "ma-

[3] London, 1934, pp. 16, 18.

[4] New York, 1957, pp. 77-78.

[5] See *Molloy*, p. 216: "Mais quand on s'asseoit par terre il faut s'asseoir en tailleur, ou en fétus, ce sont pour ainsi dire les seules postures possibles, pour un débutant."

trix of surds," a "flux of forms," where Murphy "was not free but a mote in the dark of absolute freedom." If I read this correctly, the zone of light represents the purgatorial existence pure and simple, as discussed in the Joyce essay—the stimuli and counterstimuli that keep the machinery of life in motion. The half-light and dark zones are the modes in which the mind and soul, respectively, escape from purgatory—the "ideal vegetation" of Dante, but deprived of its sense of direction; and, finally, the complete fusion with directionlessness, the abolition of space, time, and consciousness that define our terrestrial existence. And so Beckett concludes:

> It was pleasant to lie dreaming of the shelf beside Belacqua, watching the dawn break crooked. But how much more pleasant was the sensation of being a missile without provenance or target, caught up in a tumult of non-Newtonian motion. So pleasant that pleasant was not the word [p. 113].

The Belacqua fantasy can still be found in Beckett's French writings (after 1945)—explicitly in the novel *Molloy* and implicitly in his other works. In *Molloy* we once more encounter the protagonist Molloy as Belacqua:

> J'étais juché au-dessus du niveau le plus élevé de la route et plaqué par-dessus le marché contre un rocher de la même couleur que moi, je veux dire gris . . . à la façon de Belacqua, ou de Sordello, je ne me rappelle plus [p. 13].

Sordello, it will be remembered, is also in the circle of the negligent with Belacqua but, unlike his confrère, proud and disdainful ("solo sguardando / A guisa di leon quando si posa," *Purg.*, VI, 65-66). In the other French writings Belacqua is no longer specifically mentioned by name: he has been completely absorbed into the protagonists—that ghostly procession of lame, blind, impotent old men, the "dying gladiators,"[6] whose names may be Malone or Mahood, or who are simply anonymous. The sequence *Molloy* (1951), *Malone meurt* (1951), *L'Innommable* (1953), *Textes pour rien* (1956)—as the titles indicate—progressively strips the Belacqua figure of all personal identity; the two plays, *En attendant Godot* (1952) and *Fin de partie* (1957),[7] transpose the process of disintegration to the stage, prolonging monologue

[6] This expression comes from Horace Gregory's excellent article, "Beckett's Dying Gladiators," *Commonweal*, LXV, no. 4 (Oct. 26, 1954), pp. 88-92. Mr. Gregory points out that Beckett's heroes are "never completely damned or blessed. They inhabit Purgatory." This is true, I believe, except that, with the help of Dante, it can be established that Beckett's heroes inhabit the Antepurgatory rather than Purgatory.

[7] All published by Éditions de Minuit in Paris. The dates are the dates of publication, not necessarily of composition. The complete title of Beckett's latest work of fiction is *Nouvelles et Textes pour rien*.

into dialogue. In a sense, Beckett's fictional *monologues intérieurs* are simply externalized into word-and-gesture play suited to the stage.[8]

A typical instance of the continued operation of the Belacqua fantasy is the play *En attendant Godot*, where the Dantean figure has been metamorphosed into two tramps, Gogo and Didi—*clochards* in the true sense of the word. They drag their legs, if they move at all. The two symmetrical acts of the play take place on a lonely country road flanked by a solitary bare tree. The only external difference between Acts I and II lies in the fact that the tree has sprouted a few leaves, although the stage directions indicate that Act II takes place the next day. The two tramps are whiling their time away by entertaining each other. They are waiting for someone named Godot, whom they have never seen and who has promised to come. Instead of Godot, a grotesque pair arrives—a well-fed, well-clothed specimen of prosperity, Pozzo, who brandishes a whip over his servant and pack animal, Lucky, a ragged and decrepit old man, whom Pozzo reins by means of a long rope fastened around his neck. Pozzo and the two *clochards* engage in conversation; Pozzo does nearly all the talking, in the manner of a *grand seigneur*, punctuating his harangues by cracks of the whip and tugs at the rope to keep Lucky moving. At the end of this conversation, Lucky is ordered to dance and think aloud. He delivers a weird stream-of-consciousness monologue (though he is actually mute). Then the two strangers pack themselves off, and Gogo and Didi continue to wait for Godot, as night falls. A child appears to announce that Godot will not come that evening, but that he will surely come the next day. The second act follows an identical structural pattern, with the following exceptions: When Pozzo and Lucky reappear, their roles are partly reversed; Pozzo has become blind, and it is now Lucky who is actually guiding him, though still in the manner of a draft animal. The messenger who appears says that he is not the messenger of the previous day, but the message is the same. At the end of Act II the two men make a halfhearted attempt at suicide —and fail. The curtain descends in both acts on the tramps encouraging each other to move on but remaining frozen in their position. We are reminded of Dante's "come gente che va col cuore, e col corpo dimora."

This is indeed a baffling play: lack of action, lack of a clear-cut significance that can be verbally communicated—and yet a work of great power and beauty, in short, a kind of poem.

Beckett presents us with a state of eternal waiting, the Belacqua mood transformed into man's fate in *this* life. The very obscurity of the

[8] In *Fin de partie*, the master-servant couple are as inseparable as their names, Hamm and Clov, indicate. In one instance Clov asks "A quoi est-ce que je sers?" and Hamm answers "A me donner la réplique" (pp. 79-80).

figure of Godot seems to call for exegesis; and the name of Godot seems to clamor for some kind of interpretation in terms of its first three letters. But such an interpretation is too restrictive; it reduces Beckett's cosmic cry of anguish to a particular complaint. Beckett himself, in his essay on Joyce, exclaimed impatiently: "Must we wring the neck of a certain system in order to stuff it into a contemporary pigeon-hole for the satisfaction of the analogymongers? Literary criticism is not book-keeping."[9] *En attendant Godot, then,* is not to be construed as an allegory, nor is it the exposition of a system; it is, in the truest sense of Cocteau's words, "poésie de théâtre"—a coherent pattern of theatrical gestures and words, the imitation of an action (even if this action masks inaction).[10]

Beckett has this in common with Kafka: he prefers working with what W. Y. Tindall calls "unassigned symbols"; and any exegesis of Godot, as well as of Kafka's *Castle,* must always remain permeable to other meanings. Perhaps the only thing that we can assert is that Godot seems to symbolize the confirmation of all things that men hope for, the answer to the unanswerable question—because this confirmation, this answer, would somehow give meaning to man's meaninglessness and would integrate what is always disintegrating. Didi states it this way:

> A cheval sur une tombe et une naissance difficile. Du fond du trou, rêveusement, le fossoyeur applique ses fers. On a le temps de vieillir. L'air est plein de nos cris [p. 156-157].

Man's fate is to slip from womb to tomb. And yet, if Godot should come, we would understand why this is so:

> Que faisons-nous ici, voilà ce qu'il faut se demander. Nous avons la chance de le savoir. Oui, dans cette immense confusion, une seule chose est claire: nous attendons que Godot vienne [p. 134].

But does Godot ever come? Beckett does not answer the question directly in this play, but suggests that, after two broken promises (and within the context of this play, two promises equal an infinity of promises), Godot will not arrive. Godot, then, is the uncertainty of certainty, or, if you will, the certainty of uncertainty: he is the "absolute absence of the Absolute," the perennial condition of man; he is not the *deus absconditus* of Isaiah, nor the dead God of Nietzsche, nor the Wholly Other of Barth. Godot does not exist at all: he is the blissful fiction of our Belacqua imagination; he is, as a German critic, Günter Anders,

[9] *Our Exagmination,* pp. 1-2.

[10] See Edith Kern, "Drama Stripped for Inaction: Beckett's *Godot,*" *Yale French Studies,* No. 14, pp. 41-47.

puts it, "nichts als der Titel für die Tatsache, daß Dasein, das sinnlos weitergeht, sich selbst als 'Warten,' 'etwas Erwarten' mißversteht."[11] Consequently, the portrait of Godot that the messenger (or are there two messengers?) offers Gogo and Didi is intentionally nebulous: Godot has a white beard, he is both cruel and kind, he comes yet does not come.

In the absence of Godot, Didi and Gogo encounter the frightening spectacle of tyrant and victim, Pozzo and Lucky. Pozzo is a kind of anti-Godot, the man who has taken it upon himself to act as if the answers were known, who lives exclusively in terms of power and whose existence is circumscribed by time; he has made a temporal substitute for Godot. He is dependent on his watch and cannot tolerate the idea of timelessness (nor therefore of timeless waiting):

> VLADIMIR: Le temps s'est arrêté.
> Pozzo (*mettant sa montre contre son oreille*): Ne croyez pas ça. (*Il remet la montre dans sa poche.*) Tout ce que vous voulez, mais pas ça [p. 59].

His blindness in the second act is the image of his own refusal to see human existence as it really is. The condition of men joined by a bond of tyranny and servitude (to time) and by the reciprocal interdependence of torturer and victim is thus unmasked as the hideous and ludicrous spectacle of the dumb leading the blind. Against this historical vision of humanity seen as the perpetuation of Cain and Abel, we have the precarious nonhistorical humanity of the two tramps, who identify themselves with the two thieves crucified on Golgotha, and in one instance with Jesus himself; and the agony of Lucky enlists their sympathy. Yet, underscoring the ambiguity in the Gospels, Didi wonders why only one of the Evangelists states that one of the two thieves was saved and the other damned; our religious tradition is as shadowy and inconclusive as Godot.

In the midst of all this human uncertainty, confusion, and helplessness, all the categories of cognition collapse: time comes to a standstill; it has become, in Günter Anders' words, "ein stagnierender Zeitbrei" (p. 224): tomorrow (Act II) is like today (Act I); and all places in which human life flickers are like deserted country roads, where only the absence or presence of a few leaves on a tree remind us that some kind of objective time is moving on, independently of ourselves; and, deprived of the orientation in time and space—that is to say, without memory or recognition, the self no longer finds any points of reference. Thus Gogo loses his shoes in Act I and finds the same pair in Act II but insists they are not his. He comments (pp. 116-117), "On trouve

[11] Günter Anders, *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen* (Munich, 1956), p. 220.

toujours quelque chose, hein, Didi, pour nous donner l'impression d'exister?" Lucky's monologue is a frightening gibberish composed of all sorts of fragments taken from scientific and philosophical speculation, reduced to utter absurdity and incoherence, and gravitating around the words *abandonné* and *inachevé*. These two words alone summarize the plight of Beckett's waifs in this play: they are abandoned, their waiting is incomplete, their dialogue is incomplete, just as Didi's "cyclical" song at the beginning of the second act is inconclusive.

What can man do, or rather, what *does* man do, so long as his only destiny is waiting for Godot? Like Belacqua, he can resume the fetal position and pass his life in review. Or else he can play and make jokes and tell stories. This is precisely what the two tramps do; they become vaudeville actors to pass the time, "that double-headed master of damnation and salvation," as Beckett calls it elsewhere.[12] All their conversations and actions become one endless game; and, in this absorption in play, time does not pass because time has become *pastime*. Thus they live in a mythological present. "Je parle au présent, il est si facile de parler au présent, quand il s'agit du passé. C'est le présent mythologique, n'y faites pas attention" (Molloy, p. 37). *Zeitvertreib*, in Günter Anders' formulation, has become *Zeitvertreibung*.

This pointless activity has certain analogies with the notion of *homo ludens*—man as playing. The Dutch cultural historian Johan Huizinga has argued that man's civilized accomplishments rest upon this play instinct, and that the "ludic" impulse never completely disappears from "serious" activity. Beckett's tramps, in withdrawing into a charmed circle of good fun and fellowship, are not really thumbing their noses at the serious world—for "seriousness," Huizinga notes, "seeks to exclude play, whereas play can very well include seriousness."[13] The serious world is the world of Pozzo and Lucky, of master and man, the world of clocks and purposes. Pozzo and Lucky do not play: Lucky dances and thinks on command; he is no longer *homo ludens*; he *dis*plays, because the freedom of the play (i.e., the uninhibited activity of mind and body) has been abolished. Gogo and Didi, on the other hand, have elevated an archetypal human activity into the only way of life possible, in its purest and most theatrical form—waiting for Godot is equivalent to playing.

Thus the stage play, as *ludus theatralis*, becomes the total image of *ludus humanus*, of *homo ludens*. Beckett subtitled *En attendant Godot* a "tragicomedy." The term has fallen somewhat into disrepute, since

[12] *Proust* (New York, n.d.), p. 1.

[13] *Homo Ludens: A Study of the Play Element in Culture* (Boston, 1950), p. 45.

it suggests a hybrid genre and has often been undiscriminatingly applied to tragic plays with "happy endings." But in *En attendant Godot* the word acquires a new and strange significance. Here we are truly suspended between the tragic and the comic, and the play floats uneasily between the two. If tragedy asserts the possibility of man's encounter with the Absolute, then Beckett's play is nontragic in the sense in which the possibility of encountering Godot is denied; it has the makings of tragedy only in the sense that man must always act *as if* the Absolute could be encountered—but the Absolute is absolutely absent. The pathos of human impotence is closer to the comic because man, as a metaphysical being, is always caught in a web of contingencies and confusions. Günter Anders has suggested the term "ontological farce" (p. 217), because man's being is here subjected to pathetic ridicule.

A passage from Beckett's study of Proust may serve to illuminate this tension between the tragic and the comic. In discussing Proust's treatment of habit, he remarks:

> Habit is a compromise effected between the individual and his environment, or between the individual and his own organic eccentricities... Life is a succession of habits, since the individual is a succession of individuals; the world being a projection of the individual's consciousness... Habit then is the generic term for the countless treaties concluded between the countless subjects that constitute the individuals and their countless correlative objects. The periods of transition that separate consecutive adaptations... represent the perilous zones in the life of the individual, dangerous, painful, mysterious and fertile, when for a moment the boredom of living is replaced by the suffering of being [pp. 7-8].

The tragedy in Beckett's tragicomedy comes from the encounter with being, the quest for the epiphany, which results in defeat and inflicts upon men momentarily the suffering of being. The comic lies in the resignation, the lapse into habit, when the perilous zone of *ex*istence is transformed into the playground of *sub*sistence.

Here the contrast with Dante's Belacqua emerges most clearly. The juxtaposition of figures from Dante's world and Beckett's may have seemed arbitrary at first, had it not been for Beckett's own obsession with the phenomenon of Belacqua. Yet Dante's Belacqua remains comic, with a touch of the pathetic that may remind us ever so little of Musset or Chekhov, because Belacqua's stay in the Antepurgatory is finite, and because his waiting is an enforced repose, inserting a zone of pathetic resignation into his own pilgrimage. His "suffering of being" will come after he has resumed his way and toiled to the top of the mountain. Beckett's derelicts have no such destiny. Their path begins and ends at Belacqua's rock; their movement is, like Zeno's arrow, a state of rest. "Peut-il y avoir un ailleurs à cet ici infini," asks the nameless narrator

of *Textes pour rien* (p. 169), and Watt, an earlier Beckett protagonist, prefers to have his back to his destination.[14]

We have seen thus far how certain passages in Dante can be used as "controls" in an interpretation of *En attendant Godot*, indeed of Beckett's entire work. And it has also become evident that Dante's world and Beckett's are radically different in their conception of the place and significance of the purgatorial experience. In Dante's world Purgatory is the necessary ascent to perfection and innocence, in which the pilgrim is purged of vices and learns to understand the corresponding virtues. Antepurgatory is a preparation, a trial by waiting before the ascent begins. In Beckett's own words, the difference between Antepurgatory and Purgatory is the difference between real and ideal vegetation; and Beckett saw in the Joycean purgatory the conditions of his own world—no ascent and no ideal vegetation. The heroes of Beckett's universe *really* vegetate, and, since this fate is unendurable, they try to vegetate *ideally*, i.e., they persuade themselves that there *is* an ascent and wait for some sort of angel to beckon them on, like Dante's pilgrims. But the angel, the epiphany, never comes, and they finally return to real vegetation. Like the vegetable, they wilt and disintegrate. "I have never in my life been on my way anywhere, but simply on my way," says one of Beckett's spokesmen[15]—and this declaration, in one way or another, echoes through all of Beckett's work. His pilgrims' progress becomes a "véritable calvaire, sans limite de stations ni espoir de crucifixion . . . et sans Simon" and forces the pilgrim to make frequent stops (*Molloy*, p. 120). We can now grasp the real meaning of Gogo's reference to Jesus, "Toute ma vie je me suis comparé à lui" (p. 88), and see the roots of Beckett's vision in a religious nihilism—a nostalgia for an epiphany no longer believed in.

Beckett's despair is in some ways more abysmal than Kafka's. But both writers save themselves and their representation of the world by a weird humor. As the farce becomes more and more grotesque, the pathos becomes more and more unbearable. "Once a certain degree of insight has been reached," says one of Beckett's characters, "all men talk, when talk they must, the same tripe" (*Murphy*, p. 59). Both Beckett and Kafka, like so many men in our time, have been molded in the nihilistic lava that has engulfed our age—the collapse of the God idea, the conviction that God is either absent or unattainable. Beckett does not even raise the question of God's existence, but rather shows us human clowns performing their antics in a world demythologized, in which waiting-for-Godot is simply the "objective correlative" for the

[14] *Watt* (Paris, 1958), p. 28.
[15] "From an Abandoned Work," *Evergreen Review*, I, 83.

human condition. But Beckett is first and foremost a poet who shores up the ruins of man in an endeavor to save the specifically human in an antihuman universe. What is left is a fragile humanity, stumbling along aimlessly in the dark, but not alone. Gogo and Didi need each other, not because they complement each other, but simply because they *are*; man needs the companionship of his fellow man, and the precarious human solidarity that we observe in our tramps is perhaps the only thing that can be salvaged out of the chaotic cosmos. "Il faut tenter de vivre," exclaimed Valéry, after reaching a metaphysical impasse. And Didi:

> Mais à cet endroit, en ce moment, l'humanité c'est nous, que ça nous plaise ou non. Profitons-en, avant qu'il soit trop tard. Représentons dignement pour une fois l'engeance où le malheur nous a fourrés [p. 134].

Beckett, who has lost his belief in divine love—Dante's "l'amor che move il sole e l'altre stelle" and thereby comprises the divine *and* the human—is groping for whatever light and warmth may still be within the reach of human beings.

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BOOK REVIEWS

THE PENGUIN BOOK OF ITALIAN VERSE. Introduced and edited by George R. Kay. Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1958. xxxiii, 424 p.

THE PROMISED LAND AND OTHER POEMS; AN ANTHOLOGY OF FOUR CONTEMPORARY ITALIAN POETS. Selected and introduced by Sergio Pacifici. Preface by Henri Peyre. New York: S. F. Vanni, 1957. 155 p.

GIUSEPPE UNGARETTI. LIFE OF A MAN. A version with introduction by Allen Mandelbaum. London: H. Hamilton; New York: New Directions; Milan: Scheiwiller, 1958. xv, 161 p.

Questi tre libri presentano tutti poesie italiane, nel testo originale e con traduzioni di valore svariatissimo e condotte con i criteri più diversi. Nel darne notizia e nello scorrerli rapidamente non si seguirà qui l'ordine delle date di pubblicazione, ma si procederà piuttosto dal più ampio dei tre per giungere a quello che si limita all'opera di un solo poeta.

The Penguin Book of Italian Verse vorrebbe offrire un panorama della poesia italiana dalle origini ai nostri giorni, riproducendo i componimenti più notevoli ma omettendo qualsiasi passo delle opere più voluminose. Non vi si trovano quindi brani dei tre poemi principali della letteratura italiana: *La Divina Commedia*, l'*Orlando Furioso* e *La Gerusalemme Liberata*, mentre i loro autori vi son rappresentati da opere minori; il che talvolta, come nel caso dell'Ariosto, torna a loro svantaggio; ma è un inconveniente che non si poteva evitare. Per il resto, l'antologista e traduttore Kay cerca di dare quel che considera migliore e più importante. E nella maggioranza dei casi la sua scelta è adeguata. Il lettore troverà in questo volume un numero sufficiente di liriche del Petrarca, di Michelangiolo, del Foscolo e del Leopardi. Anzi di questi ultimi due si può dire che ci siano quasi tutte le cose che si vorrebbero incontrare in un libro come questo.

Com'è stato ripetuto tante volte, un'antologia è sempre un lavoro di carattere personale, soprattutto quando deve abbracciare tutta una letteratura. Il Kay, come qualsiasi altro studioso, ha certamente una visione tutta sua della letteratura italiana e si lascia perciò guidare da criteri soggettivi. Senonché un volume che s'intitola *Book of Italian Verse* dovrebbe, a nostro parere, fare anche delle concessioni ed essere il più possibile rappresentativo. La mancanza di qualsiasi concessione genera, ne siamo sicuri, le sproporzioni e le omissioni che si notano nell'antologia del Kay. Vi si leggono, per esempio, ben diciotto poesie del Campanella, non certo quel grande poeta che il Kay ci vorrebbe far credere, e non vi si legge nemmeno una riga del Parini o dell'Alfieri—come se non fossero esistiti, o fossero soltanto dei nomi. Eppure non si può capire il Foscolo senza le premesse del Parini e dell'Alfieri. Del Marino c'è anche troppo, e perfino un componimento dal titolo tutt'altro che poetico di "Donna che si lava le gambe,", mentre del Man-

zoni c'è solo "La morte di Ermengarda." Quella del Manzoni è l'omissione più grave.[1]

Il Kay cerca di giustificarsi dicendo: "Manzoni is a novelist. It is in his prose that he touches on the poetic" (p. xx). Un'affermazione simile porterebbe a una lunga discussione, ma si può tagliar corto ripetendo quel che è ormai noto da quasi un secolo e mezzo, ed era noto anche al Goethe, che il Manzoni è poeta grande in versi almeno quanto in prosa, e viceversa. Perché non dare "Il cinque maggio," una delle liriche più ispirate e più potenti della letterature italiana? E perché omettere un capolavoro come "La Pentecoste"? A causa del contenuto? Se è per questo si ricade nell'errore degl'inglesi dell'Ottocento, che rigettavano *I Promessi Sposi* semplicemente perché non ne approvavano il contenuto religioso. Errore grave in poesia. Sarebbe lo stesso che si rigattasse l'*Iliade* a l'*Eneide* perché non si crede alla mitologia.

Se un'antologia è un lavoro di carattere personale e soggettivo, la scelta implica anche un giudizio critico da parte dell'antologista. Vuol forse dire il Kay che il Parini e l'Alfieri sono, in paragone agli altri che ha inclusi, degli scrittori trascurabili e che il Manzoni è meno poeta del Campanella, del Marino, o dello stesso Giusti, rappresentato con tre poesie? Vogliamo sperare di no.

Dei poeti di fine Ottocento—Carducci, Pascoli e D'Annunzio—c'è troppo poco. Del Carducci avremmo voluto vedere in quest'antologia alcuni sonetti delle *Rime Nuove* e "Davanti San Guido," che sono fra le sue cose più riuscite. Del Pascoli, che il Kay chiama "minor poet" (p. xxi), e la cui novità e importanza si va invece imponendo sempre più a critici e lettori, avremmo voluto trovarci almeno "La tessitrice" e certe liriche più particolarmente simbolistiche, anche se ciò fosse andato a scapito de "La voce," che non ci pare davvero uno dei componimenti migliori di questo poeta. E del D'Annunzio, invece di "A una torpediniera dell'Adriatico," così retorica ed esteriore, perché non offrire "La sera fiesolana"? Del Campana c'è troppo, per un libro di questa mole, mentre del Saba non c'è nulla, e dell'Ungaretti ci avremmo aggiunto almeno il "Recitativo di Palinuro."

Con tutto questo non si vuole implicare che il libro sia cattivo; ma si vuol dire che sarebbe stato possibile presentare una scelta più equilibrata e più rappresentativa. Anche così com'è, però, ha un suo valore e può servire di avviamento alla lettura delle opere complete dei vari poeti; che è poi lo scopo principale di ogni antologia.

A piè di pagina il Kay ha anche stampato la traduzione in prosa di tutte le poesie scelte; una cosa questa utilissima per chi sa poco l'italiano e vuole aiutarsi a penetrare le immagini dell'originale con la traduzione. Ha fatto bene il Kay a proporsi delle versioni scorrevoli, semplici, che siano un ausilio alla lettura e non un sostituto dei testi. E bisogna dire che in generale le sue traduzioni sono abbastanza accurate, anche se spesso un po' approssimative. Qualche errore, o piuttosto qualche versione discutibile, non manca, soprattutto quando l'originale contiene parole usate in senso latino o in un'accezione del tutto particolare a un'età o a un poeta; ma si tratta quasi sempre di sviste che si possono facilmente correggere in una ristampa. In "Chiare, fresche e dolci acque" del Petrarca, per esempio, "seno"—nei versi "erba e fior, che la gonna / leggiadra ricoverse / con l'angelico seno"—sarebbe stato meglio intenderlo nel senso latino di "pieghe della veste," come suggerì il Carducci nel suo commento petrarchesco; ma il Kay traduce con "bosom." Nel "Trionfo di Bacco e Arianna" di Lorenzo il Magnifico, la rozzezza

[1] Molte delle omissioni e sproporzioni che si notano nel libro del Kay sono già state lamentate da Thomas G. Bergin, *Italian Quarterly*, II, 5 (Spring 1958), p. 70.

di "non può fare a Amor riparo / se non gente rozze e ingrate" sta a indicare l'opposto del "cor gentile" stilnovistico, e quindi "ingrate" va inteso come "prive di grazia" o di gentilezza; invece il Kay lo rende con "ungrateful."[2] Non vogliamo poi lasciar passare un errore degno di diventar classico. Come si sa, il Foscolo pone davanti ai *Sepolcri* una frase tolta dalle leggi delle Dodici Tavole: "Deorum manium jura sancta sunto," che in inglese si potrebbe tradurre così: "The rights of the divine dead shall be sacred." Il Kay ha confuso "manium" con "manuum," genitivo plurale di "manus," e ne ha tratto questa traduzione: "Let the laws by the Gods' hands be sacred." Un abbaglio davvero formidabile.

Ma tutto ciò, ripetiamo, non diminuisce il valore complessivo del libro, che fa uno sforzo onesto, e senz'altro un passo importante, per aiutare i lettori di lingua inglese ad avvicinarsi alla poesia italiana.

The Promised Land and Other Poems, a cura di S. Pacifici, è una breve antologia di liriche dei quattro poeti italiani più importanti della nostra età: Saba, Ungaretti, Montale e Quasimodo. Le scelte sono assai limitate. Di Saba c'è "A mia moglie," "La capra," "Ulisse," ma non c'è nulla da *Preludio e fughe* e solo un componimento da *Parole*, le raccolte più importanti di questo poeta. Di Ungaretti ci mancano "La pietà" e "I fiumi"; anzi vi si legge pochissimo perfino de *La Terra promessa*. Il titolo del libretto, *The Promised Land and Other Poems*, semberebbe promettere tutto il pubblicato di questo poema ancora incompiuto; invece ci sono solo dodici dei diciannove brevissimi *Cori descrittivi di stati d'animo di Didone* e ci mancano due delle tre liriche principali: la "Canzone" iniziale e il "Recitativo di Palinuro." Viene perciò da osservare che il titolo dell'antologia non è appropriato, perché promette quel che poi non mantiene. Di Montale non c'è né "Arsenio," né "Dora Markus," né "L'anguilla," a nominare solo pochissime delle maggiori liriche di questo poeta—forse il più grande del Novecento italiano. Quanto al Quasimodo, le poesie scelte derivano quasi tutte dal volumetto del 1947, *Giorno dopo giorno*, che segna per comune consenso una decadenza nella parabola dell'autore, mentre non vi si legge quasi nulla da *Ed è subito sera*, il libro più importante di questo scrittore. Per l'Ungaretti, il Montale e il Quasimodo la scelta che ne dà il Kay nel *The Penguin Book of Italian Verse* è senza dubbio più rappresentativa di questa.

The Promised Land s'apre con un'introduzione del curatore, che consiste di pagine divulgative, un po' vaghe e frettolose. Il quadro che vi si fa della letteratura italiana precedentemente alla prima guerra mondiale è piuttosto stereotipato, con l'aggiunta di alcune osservazioni discutibili. Vi si dice, per esempio, che prima de *La Voce* "a persistent parochialism had prevented many a cultivated Italian from critically evaluating and understanding" la cultura europea moderna (p. 9). Un'asserzione simile andava qualificata e limitata. Sarebbe facile dimostrare l'opposto: che, cioè, la cultura europea era ben nota in Italia sia nel secondo Ottocento che nel primo Novecento; basterebbe ricordare tutte le traduzioni, il lavoro dei critici italiani sulle letterature d'oltre frontiera e l'opera di tutti i maggiori poeti e scrittori dallo Zanella al Gozzano. Con *La Voce* l'interesse per gli stranieri, e particolarmente per i francesi, si accentuò, ma non nacque allora tutt'a un tratto, e anzi fu rivolto più al pensiero che all'arte. L'accusa di provincialismo alla cultura italiana di quel tempo fu già avanzata dal Binni nella sua tesi di laurea, *La poetica del decadentismo* (Firenze, 1936 e 1948)—le affermazioni del Pacifici

[2] Di imprecisioni di questo tipo ce ne sono diverse nell'antologia del Kay, e in generale derivano dal non aver tenuto presente i più recenti commenti ai vari classici italiani.

riassumono l'ultima parte dell'introduzione di quel libro—ma fu subito discussa e confutata da vari recensori.

Nelle pagine che seguono, e in cui il curatore presenta i singoli poeti, si sarebbe preferito un po' più d'insistenza sulle qualità espressive di ogni autore, sulle sue immagini, su ciò insomma che fa sì che i loro componimenti possan chiamarsi poesia. Ma anche se non si tratta di contributi critici, perché vi si ripetono cose generiche e note, e anche se vi si trovano alcuni errori di fatto,[3] questi rapidissimi profili possono in certo modo fare da presentazione e in tal senso possono avere una loro utilità.

Le traduzioni sono opera di ben dieci collaboratori differenti e, come bisogna aspettarsi in casi simili, son di qualità diversissima: alcune buone, altre mediocri, e altre infine pessime. Le migliori son quelle del Bergin, che ha dato tre poesie del Saba riuscendo a conservare in inglese la semplicità e la suggestività dell'originale. Diverso è il caso di quelle di Frederick M. Clapp, che ha tradotto il resto della sezione dedicata al Saba, offrendo non delle versioni ma dei liberi rifacimenti tutt'altro che encomiabili. Segnalo specialmente il sonetto da *Durante una marcia* (p. 29) e "Violino" (p. 43), in cui il traduttore è caduto in continui errori d'interpretazione e ha tradito sia la lettera che lo spirito dell'originale. Assai migliore è "A mia moglie" e "A Lina," benché in quest'ultima non si capisca come mai "solenne notte" (p. 26) sia resa con "desolate night," quando "solenne" indica la vacuità immensa e silenziosa della notte in cui il minimo suono echeggia profondo, come in una cattedrale. Ma le più scadenti di tutte queste traduzioni son quelle delle poesie di Ungaretti, e soprattutto quelle di John G. Congley e di Gilbert Creighton. Su di esse dovremo soffermarci un momento se non altro per convalidare questo guidizio con prove convincenti.

Una delle più sentite e più chiare poesie di Ungaretti è, come si sa, "Tu ti spez-

[3] Due di tali errori riguardano Ungaretti. A p. 18 si legge che Ungaretti "accepted a chair of Italian literature offered by the Argentine Government." Per quanto si sappia, Ungaretti non ha mai insegnato in Argentina, ma a San Paolo del Brasile. Il Pacifici è stato tratto in inganno da G. Spagnoletti (la fonte della maggior parte delle sue informazioni sui vari poeti), il quale scrive: nel 1936, "invitato d'onore del governo argentino, Ungaretti partecipa ad un Congresso internazionale di scrittori. Nel medesimo anno, per invito del governo dello Stato di San Paolo, accettava in quella Università l'ufficio della cattedra di lingua e letteratura italiana" (*Antologia della poesia italiana, 1909-1949*, Parma, 1950, p. 146); il Pacifici, nel ripetere la notizia, evidentemente non si è accorto che lo Stato di San Paolo non è in Argentina ma in Brasile. Il fatto è importante, perché senza la presenza del Brasile non si capirebbero poesie come "Tu ti spezzasti," scritte col paesaggio brasiliano davanti agli occhi. Ancora a p. 18, parlando dei *Cori descrittivi di stati d'animo di Didone*, il Pacifici asserisce che "they describe the arrival of Aeneas in a promised land." Ciò potrebbe esser giusto se si riferisse alle premesse generali de *La terra promessa* e soprattutto ai *Cori descrittivi di stati d'animo di Enea* (se ne possono leggere alcuni nella riproduzione fotografica del manoscritto ungarettiano nella prima pagina di *Life of a Man*), ma non se si riferisce a questi cori in particolare. In essi parla Didone, e sempre al femminile. Con le parole dell'eroina il poeta vuol rappresentare il momento in cui si sentono gli ultimi barlumi della passione carnale, si vede la gioventù fuggire per sempre e ci si accorge della vecchiaia che sopraggiunge. Didone esprime se stessa e il suo tramonto, ma nello stesso tempo ferma un momento comune a tutta l'umanità. Per il significato dei *Cori descrittivi di stati d'animo di Didone* si veda quel che ne disse l'Ungaretti stesso al Piccioni (cfr. G. Ungaretti, *La terra promessa*, con l'apparato critico delle varianti e uno "studio" di Leone Piccioni, 2a.ed., Milano, 1954, pp. 51-52).

zasti," scritta in memoria del figliuoletto mortogli in Brasile. Comincia con la visione dei sassi immani che fremono ancora nelle "fionde / Di originarie fiamme" e continua proiettando la gentile immagine del bambino contro un paesaggio preistorico e preumano da cui il bambino stesso non poteva evitar d'esser travolto ("non avresti potuto non spezzarti"). Trascrivo la terza strofa:

"Di ramo in ramo fiorrancino lieve,
Ebbri di meraviglia gli avidi occhi
Ne conquistavi la screziata cima,
Temerario, musico bimbo,
Solo per rivedere all'imo lucido
D'un fondo e quieto baratro di mare
Favolose testuggini
Ridestarsi fra le alghe."

Il poeta qui ritrae il bimbo che, come un uccellino ("fiorrancino") grazioso e agile ("lieve"), sale in cima al pino brasiliano per guardare le testuggini che si muovono nell'acqua. L'immagine dell'uccellino suggerisce quella di "musico bimbo," e, nel seguito della lirica, quella, semplicissima, di "alzavi le braccia come ali" e molte altre. Il Congley ha cominciato col confondere "fiorrancino" (in inglese "wren") con "fiorellino"; il resto gli si è trasformato in una ridda di parole incomprensibili; ed ecco allora i risultati:

"From branch to slender branch
Flourish, drunk with marvel,
Eager eyes,
Whose many-colored tip you won,
Thou bold and musical child
Only one to see again
At its shining pit
Where a deep sea-monster
And fabled turtles wake."
(Page 73)

Tutte le versioni di mano del Congley sono così. Perfino i titoli son quasi sempre sbagliati. E anche quando gli succede di tradurre alla lettera il Congley cade in svarioni come questo: "Non avresti potuto non spezzarti" gli diventa addirittura "You could not be rent" (p. 75), che significa esattamente l'opposto. Ma non molto migliori son le versioni, sempre di poesie ungarettiane, a firma del Creighton. Anche il Creighton cade in continui errori, di cui alcuni sono a dir poco stupefacenti. Ne "Il capitano," per esempio, il poeta ricorda un ufficiale caduto ucciso in guerra; nessuno lo vide cadere: scomparve nella polvere e nel frastuono, ma poi "riapparve *adagiato* in un solco," cioè quando fu rivisto era disteso nel riposo della morte; e l'Ungaretti aggiunge che gli chiuse gli occhi. Il Creighton invece dice che il Capitano (già cadavere, si badi bene) "reappeared *slow-moving* in a furrow" (p. 59).

Le versioni dal Montale hanno meno errori, e così quelle dal Quasimodo. Ma in una poesia del Quasimodo ("Lettera alla madre"), tradotta da Bernard Wall, il Naviglio, il noto canale che passa per Milano, vien reso con "Ship," cosicché il verso "il Naviglio urta confusamente sulle dighe" diventa: "The Ship in confusion hits against the dykes" (p. 153). E quanto al Montale, i traduttori, benché siano

stati in genere più accurati, non sembra abbiano fatto nessuno sforzo per rendere la forza espressiva dell'originale.

Ma davanti a cose come quelle di cui si è parlato riesce pressoché impossiblie trattare di valore poetico e di fedeltà alle immagini dei testi italiani. Vien piuttosto da porre una domanda. Come ha fatto il Pacifici ad accogliere versioni simili? È vero che il curatore dell'antologia non si può ritenere responsabile del lavoro dei suoi traduttori; d'altro lato è anche vero che egli ha sollecitato e accettato quelle versioni, e che il libro, alla fin dei conti, porta la sua firma.

Life of a Man è ben altro tipo di lavoro. Allen Mandelbaum vi presenta tutte le poesie più significative di Ungaretti, riproducendo anche lui il testo italiano e facendone la traduzione. Le pagine introduttive sono anche in questo caso una presentazione, ma come tali e pur nella loro brevità risultano assai precise e talvolta perfino penetranti. Le versioni dimostrano che il Mandelbaum si è impegnato a fondo e ha lavorato sul serio. Ha capito l'originale e anzi ne ha quasi sempre sentite anche le sfumature, e si è sforzato notevolmente per rendere in inglese le immagini e finanche il ritmo; per riprodurre cioè, nello stesso tempo, la lettera e lo spirito. La fedeltà che il Mandelbaum ha cercato di perseguire nel suo lavoro non è pedanteria, ma è quell'aurea fedeltà a un testo che è sempre necessaria se si vuol volgere un'opera d'arte in un'altra lingua: è aderenza espressiva, e dà come risultato una vera traduzione. Si veda, ad esempio, la prima strofa de "I fiumi," dove si preserva la lenta e malinconica melodia dell'originale senza tradire né un'immagine né una parola:

> "I lean against this mutilated tree
> abandoned in this crater
> that wears the languor
> of a circus
> before or after the spectacle
> and watch the quiet passage
> of clouds upon the moon."
> (Page 19)

O si legga il "Ricordo d'Affrica," davvero bello. Notevole è come il Mandelbaum ne rende l'ultimo verso ("Ah! questa è l'ora che annuvola e smemora"): "Ah! this is the hour that clouds and disremembers" (p. 51). Quel "disremembers" che vuol ripetere il sapore raro e suggestivo dello "smemora," anche se di suono un po' aspro dà senz'altro un'indicazione dello sforzo e della sensibilità poetica del traduttore. Oppure si legga "Caino" e moltissime delle liriche anche più recenti di Ungaretti.

Con ciò non si vuol dire che le versioni del Mandelbaum siano del tutto immuni da errori o da imprecisioni; qua e là c'è qualche parola che non rende o che svia l'immagine dell'originale, e non vi manca qualche omissione. Così troviamo, nella bellissima "Vanità," il "si rinviene / un'ombra / Cullata e / piano / franta" tradotto con "comes to as / a shadow / Cradled and / slowly / shattered" (p. 41). Il "si rinviene" di questo contesto non significa "si rià," "ricupera i sensi" dopo uno svenimento, che è il senso secondario benché popolare della parola; ma è usato nell'accezione dotta di "si ritrova" o "si scopre." "Si rinviene / un'ombra" andava, quindi, tradotto con "discovers / he is a shadow," o qualcosa di simile. E indica che l'uomo, per un'illuminazione improvvisa, si rende conto di essere una nullità. L'errore del Mandebaum è particolarmente spiacevole proprio perché per il resto "Vanità" conserva tutta la purezza del testo italiano. In "Sono una crea-

tura" i tre versicoli finali, "La morte / si sconta / vivendo," son resi con "Death / discounted is / in living" (p. 17). Anche qui il Mandelbaum ha scelto il senso errato di "scontare." Nel contesto ungarettiano vale "espiare," e una traduzione esatta sarebbe quindi: "Death / is expiated / by living." Ma le sviste di questo tipo non sono molte, e semmai potranno esser facilmente corrette in una seconda edizione.

Gioverà ora riferire la versione della terza strofa di "Tu ti spezzasti" anche per permettere un confronto con la citata interpretazione (se si può dir così) che della stessa strofa dà il Congley in *The Promised Land*:

> "From branch to branch light wren,
> Your eyes with wonder drunk
> You won the speckled summit,
> Child rash and musical,
> Only at the lucid depth
> Of a quiet gulf of sea, to see again
> Fabulous tortoises
> Amid the seaweed, reawakening."
> (Page 111)

Questa non è certo una delle versioni più riuscite del Mandelbaum: è un po' troppo contorta, e nel secondo verso c'è l'omissione di "avidi," che ci potrebbe esser rimasto senza sciupare il ritmo, anzi l'avrebbe forse aiutato ("Your *avid* eyes with wonder drunk"). Ma non si può negare che cerchi di riprodurre le immagini dell'originale con precisione e chiarezza.

Life of a Man, a dispetto delle poche riserve che si possono fare, fa onore agli studi italiani in America e vi si può affidare chiunque voglia famigliarizzarsi con l'opera di uno dei maggiori poeti del nostro tempo. Il Mandelbaum ci promette anche larghe scelte delle poesie di Montale e di Quasimodo. Non c'è che da auspicarsi che il suo lavoro venga presto portato a termine. Se dopo si potesse vedere anche un'antologia delle liriche di Saba e un'altra che contenesse le migliori del Cardarelli e di qualche altro, si avrebbero rappresentati in inglese tutti i poeti italiani più notevoli del periodo che va dalla prima guerra mondiale fino ad oggi.

Dei tre libri che abbiamo scorsi brevemente, quindi, *The Penguin Book of Italian Verse* è il più accessibile e il più vario, quello che interesserà il maggior numero di lettori; e *Life of a Man* è il più impegnativo, il più curato, quello che eserciterà maggiore attrattiva sugli amanti della poesia.

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LA CRÍTICA LITERARIA CONTEMPORÁNEA. By Enrique Anderson Imbert. Buenos Aires: Ediciones Bure, 1957. 154 p.

Although numerous studies and monographs of merit dealing with criticism and literary analysis have been published in Spanish in recent years, none have attempted to survey criticism as an independent discipline. Professor Anderson Imbert's book is therefore a welcome contribution, though it is limited somewhat by the fact that it is directed primarily to students.

The first three chapters, "Disciplinas que estudian la literatura," "Generalidades sobre la crítica," and "Modos de estudiar la crítica," concern themselves with the refutation of misconceptions about criticism and with the definition of literary

criticism as a discipline. The author makes the usual protestations against explanation of literary phenomena with "entes metafísicos" such as "la hispanidad," "lo telúrico," "la raza," etc. (p. 19), and indirectly urges the tyro to avoid exploiting literature as source material for other disciplines under the delusion of engaging in literary criticism. Such admonitions are unfortunately very appropriate and necessary with regard to Spanish American criticism.

Chapter IV, "Clasificación de los métodos de la crítica," is the heart of the book and can be read with profit by scholars as well as students. Six methods or approaches are discussed: "histórico," "sociológico," "temático," "formalista," "estilístico," "dogmático," "impresionista," and "revisionista." The author's preference for the "internal," and more specifically, the "stylistic" approach to criticism is patent from the outset, and critical methods or attitudes which are inconsistent with his own are sometimes presented in an oversimplified and unfavorable light. For instance, the examination of literature from the point of view of genres "acepta la existencia real de los géneros—epopeya, tragedia, lírica, etc.—como si fueran instituciones o reinos naturales fijos que imponen sus leyes a los escritores. Esta 'crítica de los géneros' es la más clásica, como que viene de Aristóteles y Horacio. Suele ser estática: y aunque se agite y cambie de postura en su sillón académico, no se resuelve a ponerse de pie para acompañar a las obras individuales en sus libres paseos por la historia" (p. 52).

The author's impatience with critical interest in genres leads to an unjustly severe denial of the merit of such critical activity. It would not be inconsistent to subscribe to the requirements of literary criticism as he himself defines it (see p. 27) and still work with profit in terms of genres. He is led to similar excesses elsewhere and particularly in his comments (p. 105) on the "método dogmático" —an unusually unstable straw man.

The organization and expressly didactic purpose of the book lead the reader to expect a generally unbiased survey of various critical attitudes, but as the foregoing examples suggest, the author's persuasive efforts are reserved for the apology of his preferred critical method, which is at once internal, stylistic, and historical. The historical aspects make up the unseen foundation; the stylistic analysis constitutes the brilliant and visible portion of the finished critical product. The importance of historical perspective cannot, in the reviewer's opinion, be affirmed too often. Mr. Anderson Imbert makes this affirmation in his pleasantly colloquial style: "Algunos formalistas se desinteresan del contexto histórico y del valor estético de la obra analizada. Así dicen ellos. En verdad, no prescinden de la Historia, sino que la dan por sabida. Confían en que el lector, por su cuenta, ponga cada cosa en su sitio" (p. 91).

Although some readers may object to the fact that not all the critical approaches are presented in convincing terms, certainly it is the author's involvement in his own method that gives the book its intensity and provocativeness; the vigorous and personal style adds a liveliness which contributes measurably to the pleasure of the reading.

Chapter V, "La crítica integral," a discussion of Croce on Dante, is a random illustration, for the student reader, of the objectives of what the author deems great criticism, i.e., the utilization of multiple critical approaches without the sacrifice of the wholeness of the work examined. The fact that Croce has been chosen is not to be interpreted as advocacy of Crocean discipleship; the author simply considers great criticism to be the result of breadth and not confined to one or another critical approach in isolation.

Of greater interest to the specialist is the closing chapter, a very brief but valuable essay on the "Estado actual de la crítica literaria hispanoamericana," which posits numerous and credible hypotheses concerning the enormous output and uneven quality of literary criticism in Hispanic America. It also offers what is perhaps the most succinct description to be found anywhere of the nature of Spanish American critical activity:

"En pocas partes del mundo se habla tanto de literatura como en Hispanoamérica. Y esta gran conversación, por formar juicios sobre la literatura, es ya crítica literaria. Crítica ocasional, espontánea, improvisada, cortés o malhumorada, con flores para el amigo y palos para el enemigo. Las palabras de crítica literaria que se sueltan en el calor de una tertulia, suelen fijarse por escrito, en cartas, prólogos, gacetillas, ensayos; y después suelen recogerse en libros. Y así la vida intelectual hispanoamericana ofrece este curioso espectáculo: de tener una enorma producción crítica desproporcionada a la producción literaria. Es una hipertrofia del órgano crítico. En este tipo de crítica hay de todo. Naturalmente, lo que abunda es la irresponsabilidad. Por lo general se lanzan opiniones que no están respaldadas ni por una concepción del mundo ni por una teoría de la literatura ni por una tabla de valores. En el mejor de los casos, de esas opiniones caprichosas se pueden extraer los rudimentos de una posición crítica muy superficial: dogmática, hedonista, impresionista... Las más de las veces, ni siquiera eso. Por culpa de tal plétora de opiniones espontáneas es que se oye constantemente, en todos los países hispanomericanos, la queja de que no tenemos crítica literaria..." (pp. 124-125).

Two bibliographies are provided; the larger includes selections from recent literature (primarily North American and European) on criticism. The titles are arranged under headings which correspond to the divisions of the book. The shorter bibliography, the author explains, is "el primer borrador de las fuentes bibliográficas para una disertación posible sobre la crítica de hoy en Hispanoamérica." Though fragmentary it should be of considerable interest to Hispanists, particularly those in the Spanish American field.

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CONTEMPORARY LITERARY SCHOLARSHIP: A CRITICAL REVIEW. Edited by Lewis Leary. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1958. x, 474 p.

Contemporary Literary Scholarship is a useful reference manual for students of English and American literature. It aims to present a survey of recent scholarship and criticism covering the major literary periods and genres. Eighteen contributors have collaborated in bringing together these bibliographical essays. It is a valuable enterprise, and all concerned with it have earned the gratitude of their readers.

A volume of this kind is, however, bound to have weaknesses. Not all of the contributors conceived of their task in the same way. Thus Gerald E. Bentley, who certainly knows a great deal about scholarship dealing with "Shakespeare and His Times," contributes a slight 12-page account that mentions most of the main general works and reference tools but hardly begins to dig into the complexities of recent investigations. Mr. Bentley's main concern is "to save a little time for busy and conscientious teachers."

At the opposite extreme, Henry Popkin takes his responsibilities seriously indeed and crowds into 48 dense pages on "The Drama" every item he considered of possible value to a research scholar. Mr. Popkin has a passion for factual information and for cataloguing that does not make for easy reading, but he knows his subject well. The advanced undergraduate may find it easier to get a start on the study of Elizabethan drama from Mr. Bentley, but the research scholar will get a good deal more from Mr. Popkin. Clearly, these writers—and several others—conceived of their tasks differently, and the editor seems to have been quite willing to let each contributor work on his own terms. Thus Merritt Y. Hughes, recognizing the utter impossibility of an analysis of seventeenth-century scholarship in 15 pages, limits his discussion to Milton and Donne, and on Milton he is very good indeed. But his essay is still entitled "The Seventeenth Century" and provides one more illustration of the compromise with its subject matter that a book of this kind entails.

The organization of the contents raises yet another question. The book is divided into four main parts: "The Problem," "The Periods," "The Genres," and "The Audience." It is difficult to see the logic in this sequence, except in the fact that all of these headings embrace subjects which have been studied at length, or which the editor apparently feels should be studied.

The first section, "The Problem," is a preface to the bibliographical survey. It contains two short essays, "The Scholar-Critic" by Jacques Barzun and "Literary Scholarship and the Teaching of English" by Lewis Leary. Both essays are lively and stimulating, and both emphasize the vital interrelationships between scholarship and criticism on the one hand and research and teaching on the other. Mr. Barzun is rather hard on the condition of the humanities fifty years ago along side of more recent "progress," but he is also concerned with the future of literary study, and in this respect he is virtually alone among the contributors. With so much scholarship to survey, one could hardly expect the contributors to break new ground in these essays, but it might not be too much to demand at least some indication of what new investigations are needed and where and how pioneering work may yet be done. Mr. Barzun is concerned with principles rather than with bibliographical entries, but his approch goes far toward pointing the way by which the claims of literary history and literary criticism can be brought into nearer accord. Mr. Leary's essay shows a keen awareness of the responsibility of the teacher to his subject and of humanizing as well as the humanistic function of scholarship.

The second section, "The Periods," follows a chronological pattern, which is intelligible enough. The third section, "The Genres," is more problematic, for we learn that the literary genres are "Modern Literary Criticism," "Poetry," "The Novel," "The Drama," and "Comparative Literature." Clearly, comparative literature had to go somewhere, but the logic of organization is difficult to follow at this point. Similarly, the fourth section, "The Audience," seems to be tacked on, and bears no organic relation to the rest of the book. Why not include separate discussions of "The Writer" or "The Work of Art" as well? The inclusion of essays by Patrick D. Hazard on "The Public Arts and the Private Sensibility" and Lennox Grey on "Literary Audience" is a gesture in the direction of pedagogy and popular taste, but many readers will wonder if these discussions really belong in the book. Social history, the mutations of taste, and the sociological background of thought and expression are all subjects worthy of independent research, but they have at best marginal value in a critical review of contemporary literary scholarship.

Comparatists will be most interested in Charlton Laird's essay on "Comparative Literature," and they will find much valuable information in it. Mr. Laird, unlike most of his fellow contributors, is more concerned with arguing a position than with listing or describing publications, and, even if his attitudes are somewhat questionable, at least they stimulate the reader to reconsider the principles and objectives of comparative studies.

Let me say at the outset that Mr. Laird undoubtedly has too high an opinion of the value of world literature or general literature as an academic subject, and too low an opinion of comparative literature and perhaps of research and scholarship as well. He approaches comparative literature primarily by way of what he feels is wrong with it, rather than out of a conviction of its importance as a synthesizing discipline. Moreover, he bases his criticisms on a nominal and essentially meaningless distinction between so-called French and American "schools" of comparative literature. For Mr. Laird, Fernand Baldensperger, Paul Hazard, Jean-Marie Carré, and their confreres were positivists, interested in a narrow, factual, and pseudoscientific approach, whereas in the United States there is "an insistence that literature be studied as literature and for its impact as literature whatever may have been the 'influences' on the author" (p. 341). Mr. Laird should recognize that the French masters in their major writings as well as in their teaching were far more sensitive to aesthetic values than he cares to admit. In a recent essay, M. Roland Mortier has justly described the work of Paul Hazard: "une œuvre solide, attachante et forte, dont le recul du temps n'a fait apparaître qu'avec plus d'éclat les vertus de sincérité, de pénétration intelligente, d'humaine compréhension." Yet, to read Mr. Laird, it would be difficult to realize that he and M. Mortier were writing about the same man. In the case of Jean-Marie Carré, his reputation as a comparatist owes much more to his discussion of the impact of Goethe on Carlyle —an "influence" which is neither mechanical nor trivial—than it does to the rather casually written introduction to M.-F. Guyard's slight volume in a series that clearly does not address itself to the scholarly public. It is true, of course, that the concept of influence has been abused, but it is wrong to claim that influence studies were either the sole or the exclusive preoccupation of the French *comparatiste*, and wrong too to insist that the study of influence necessarily precludes critical interpretation or value judgments.

Mr. Laird's account of comparative literature as a university discipline in America contains some useful information about its early history, but not nearly enough is said about its present state; and this is an opportunity lost. He leans rather heavily on the *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature*, and he rightly calls our attention to Arthur E. Christy's pioneering *Comparative Literature News-Letter*, but it is strange that he does not mention the *Comparative Literature News Letter* published since 1952 by the Harvard Comparative Literature Conference. He says little indeed about comparative literature at Harvard, where Harry Levin, Renato Poggioli, and their associates have carried on a program of graduate instruction for several years.

Perhaps the best thing about Mr. Laird's essay is his plea for serious attention to Oriental literature. This area of study should be encouraged by comparatists; for the exclusive concentration on European and American culture is undoubtedly one of the major weaknesses of American higher education. It should be added that efforts are now being made to remedy this neglect throughout the country, and it is important that qualified teachers be developed who can bridge the gap between Oriental and Western literatures on a somewhat more scholarly plane than that

of most courses in "world literature." Even these courses, however, are at least a beginning.

Mr. Laird's list of reference works and secondary studies will be helpful to the beginning student of comparative literature. But his essay would have been much better had it concluded with a positive awareness of the promise of comparative studies and the importance of a comparative point of view in all areas of literary study.[1]

The contributions dealing with English and American literature stem from a wide variety of scholarly allegiances and critical commitments, but almost all of them are packed with useful bibliographical information and commentary. George K. Anderson provides a lucid introduction to "*Beowulf*, Chaucer, and Their Backgrounds." James L. Clifford's survey of "The Eighteenth Century" is remarkable for its breadth and detail, even if it is not always easy to distinguish what is of first importance from what is merely incidental. Richard Harter Fogle on "The Romantic Movement" is excellent on the individual writers; his remarks on the movement as a whole are thoughtful and illuminating, but are more appropriate to romantic critical theory than to more imaginative expression.

Leslie A. Fiedler has a large order indeed in "American Literature," even if he does not proceed beyond the end of the nineteenth century. He wisely refers the reader to other recent surveys of scholarship for bibliographical details, and directs his attention to the broad outlines and main trends in the recent study of American literature. The writers discussed are Poe, Emerson, Hawthorne, Thoreau, Melville, Whitman, James, and Twain. Many of Mr. Fiedler's offhand observations are arresting and thought-provoking, but his sensitivity to creativity and originality in criticism is canceled out by a commitment to an anthropological or mythic approach to literature, which has probably done and is doing more damage to literary interpretation than any other single point of view. Mr. Fiedler's attitude of mind could be best described as a retreat from liberalism, in which the "liberal" is equated with the normal, the buoyant and optimistic, as opposed to what he considers a deeper view of life, embracing the abnormal, the alienated, and the mythic. It may seem curious to some readers that Mr. Fiedler's "liberalism"—poor straw man—takes no account of alienation or tragedy. If the personal commitment is at least forthright, the critical assumptions shaping and directing that commitment are fundamentally wrongheaded and offer no guide at all to the fruitful understanding of literature. The best things in Mr. Fiedler's essay are comments made simply by the way: Parrington's "sheer nerve"; Matthiessen's "passionate involvement"; Whitman's experimentalism; and the like. And even his aberrations are preferable to a dissembling neutrality.

Fred B. Millet provides a good basic list of studies of "Contemporary British

[1] Readers familiar with the subject are bound to be disturbed by the large number of misprints and mistakes in Mr. Laird's essay. The following corrections should be made in a second edition: *Goethe en France* is by Baldensperger, not by Hazard (p. 344); read "vergleichende Literatur" for "vergleichende Literature" (p. 345); read "Friederich for "Freiderich' (p. 347); "Tom Peete Cross" for "Tom Pete Cross" (p. 348); *The Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature* was founded in 1952, not 1953 (p. 348); "G. L. Anderson" for "G. D. Anderson" (p. 358); "Forschungsprobleme" for "Forschungprobleme" (pp. 362 and 365); "Hatzfeld" for "Hatzfield" (p. 365); "Baldensperger's study of poetry and music" for "Carré's" (p. 365); "Tenney Frank" for "Frank Tenney" (p. 366); "Reto R. Bezzola" for "Reta" (p. 367); "Henri Roddier" is omitted as the author of *J.-J. Rousseau en Angleterre au xviii*[e] *siècle* (p. 367).

Literature," although he says very little about English writing since 1930; perhaps there is little that should be said. R. W. B. Lewis discusses "Contemporary American Literature" by genres, but omits the drama. His defense of the study of contemporary literature is cogent and sensible, and his account of recent writing on American poetry and fiction is enriched by his familiarity with the best of current European criticism of our literature. Mr. Lewis makes a noteworthy attempt to reconcile the uniquely artistic and the broadly historical or social character of literary works; his essay is one of the best in the book.

The essays on the genres necessarily duplicate much of the material provided in the discussions of literary periods. William Van O'Connor's view of "Modern Literary Criticism" is almost wholly confined to recent American criticism of English and American writings, and skirts most of the controversial issues. I suspect that Edmund Wilson is a better critic than Mr. O'Connor admits, and that he does too much honor to Yvor Winters. I wonder, too, if students should be urged to emulate Mr. O'Connor's "models of critical explication" (p. 227). His view of archetypal or mythical approaches to criticism is strikingly naive and distressingly neutral. George Arms on "Poetry" is balanced and systematic, but he tends to overstate the case for "explication" as a method. "Explication" is as much an approach or an attitude of mind as a method, and Mr. Arms seems to ascribe to it far more than is its due. I am sure that he would be among the first to agree that there were discriminating readers of poetry before there were explicators.

Like the other writers on the genres, Bradford A. Booth on "The Novel" has far too much to do. He deals mainly with twentieth-century novelists in England and America, but includes earlier novelists as well, duplicating a good deal of the material in Mr. Clifford's essay and in Lionel Stevenson's comprehensive survey of "The Victorian Period." Mr. Booth's historical generalizations are sometimes questionable. His suggestion that the twentieth-century psychological novel is related to the French symbolists overlooks Dostoevsky, whose impact on the modern novel was far more powerful. The very notion of symbolic fiction or of "the symbolist novel," which Mr. Booth evidently derives from William York Tindall, is in need of far more clarification than is possible in a few brief observations. It is an interesting exercise to contrast Mr. Booth's judgments of recent studies of the major nineteenth-century American novelists with the earlier remarks of Mr. Fiedler.

Contemporary Literary Scholarship is itself a commentary on the state of literary study in the American university. The variety of approach is bewildering; the bibliography seemingly endless; its quality often questionable. I am sure that more readers than one will be thankful to many of the contributors for what they left out. There is in America today an emphasis on quantity of publication, on the one hand, and singularity of interpretation, on the other, that militates against leisurely and thoughtful reflection in scholarship and criticism. This condition cannot be charged to the essayists in this book, although most of them come to terms too easily with their assignment. Yet, whatever misgivings readers of these bibliographical essays may have over the confusions and contradictions in every area of study, these very weaknesses are necessary consequences of the process by which genuinely significant scholarship comes about. When all is said and done, it is gratifying to note, in the concluding "Selected Bibliography," how much first-rate work has been accomplished by American scholars and critics. Not all readers may agree with the compilation of the fifty best books, but there is no doubt that the list is a very good one. Whatever reservations one may have over the state of

affairs reflected in *Contemporary Literary Scholarship*, we must be grateful to Mr. Leary and his associates for calling our attention to the substantial body of work well done that enriches and animates our literary heritage.

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BOILEAU AND LONGINUS. By Jules Brody. Geneva: Librairie E. Droz, 1958. 165 p.

This is not a conventional source study, a "search for borrowed precepts" (p. 33), but rather an attempt to redefine Boileau's point of view as a theorist and critic of poetry. Boileau's translation of Longinus, with its attendant preface, reflections, and remarks, is merely the starting point for a searching exploration of the aesthetic premises underlying the whole body of his verse and prose. Brody's aim is to "elucidate the workings" of Boileau's mind (p. 35), to recover the "psychological principle" which defines the *mens boleviana* (p. 142).

In his opening chapter, he reviews the historical facts connected with the rediscovery of Longinus in the sixteenth century, the early editions and translations, knowledge of his treatise before and immediately after Boileau's *Traité* in 1674, the general character of the translation, and the circumstances of its composition and publication. In this introductory section of the book, Brody's main contribution is a convincing argument for a very early date of composition, before 1663. The evidence, previously set forth in the *Romanic Review*,[1] is restated and further tightened. He also gives reason to think that the delay in publication, particularly after 1672, was probably due to the hostility of Chapelain. The relation of Boileau to Longinus, he says in concluding the first chapter, was not one of influence in the ordinary sense, but rather an active choice on Boileau's part, springing from an aesthetic predilection which lay close to the heart of his aspirations and convictions as a poet (pp. 32-35).

The second chapter, in which Brody begins the analysis proper, is typical of both his method and the general tendency of his interpretation. He does not move systematically through the text of Longinus, following its logical structure, but instead begins with the well-known passage in Chapter VIII on passion as a source of the sublime, a key statement often cited to support the view that the doctrine of Longinus is incompatible with the rationalism of Boileau. He then discusses passages in Chapters III, XXXII, XXXIV, XVI, XLIII, XLII, I, X, and II, from which the concept of *chairos* gradually emerges as a central clue to the understanding of Longinus. This idea, implying an inner sense of timeliness and measure as the essence of the poetic process, sharply distinguishes Longinus from the scientific as well as the demonic school in ancient criticism. There is an art of the sublime, a formulable method or system, but Brody conceives it as operating through an undefinable *Taktgefühl*, a "practiced judgment" or "trained instinct" which unites nature and art, vitality and control, in a single creative act (pp. 41-44).

In section 5 of the second chapter, Brody turns to Boileau. Taking up first the crucial passage in Chapter II on the possibility of an art of the sublime, he com-

[1] J. Brody, "The Date of Boileau's *Traité du Sublime*," *RR*, XLVIII (1957), 265-274.

pares the Greek of Longinus, Pietra's Latin version, and Boileau's French in microscopic detail. The small departures from the sense of the original which are revealed by this close and subtle analysis, Brody says, serve to emphasize even more sharply the notion of a certain "practiced reflex" or "parfaite habitude" as the psychological basis of the creative process (pp. 45-47). This idea, which Brody equates with both *raison* and *bon sens*, is then further developed and supported by a similar study of Boileau's rendering of other passages in Longinus and by a series of quotations from the epistles, satires, *Art poétique*, and prefaces (pp. 47-51). These primary sources are supplemented throughout by reference to historical dictionaries and a wide variety of scholarly studies in French, German, Italian, and English. The chapter ends with a summary:

"To Boileau's mind the terminus towards which the creative strategy proceeds is marked by a peremptory point of balance and rightness which can be approached only with awareness of and obedience to what has been called the internal imperative. In an exceptionally articulate moment he made it clear that, at bottom, this practiced response to situational urgency is a *savoir secret;* this was adumbrated further by the equally suggestive notions of 'génie,' 'talent,' and 'goût.' This proposition takes a strange turn, however, as Boileau yokes to a common function with the latter the idea of 'bon sens.' But the gesture cannot be marked up to chance or error; Boileau not only used but insisted on the term and argued for its retention as at least equal to 'inventiveness' or 'imaginativeness'" (pp. 52-53).

The four remaining chapters—"Reason," "The Sublime," "The Rules," and "The Illusion of Truth"—continue the same kind of analysis with similar materials and conclude with a more fully elaborated statement of the same thesis (pp. 141-142).

A book so unconventionally organized is difficult to evaluate justly. The interpretation is semantic rather than logical, a study of the meanings and associational connections of terms rather than of the intellectual structure of an articulated philosophy. Brody passes over several sections of *On the Sublime*, as well as a good many statements about poetry in the poems, prefaces, and letters of Boileau, and makes no attempt to find and follow the natural lines of cleavage in his material, the pattern of argument in either of his critics. The sequence of ideas is not theirs but his. Though admirably adapted to recover the nuances of meaning in a critical terminology "grown cryptic with time" (p. 62), such a procedure can hardly be expected to result in a complete and balanced formulation of Boileau's thought.

Brody says that he has tried to restore to Boileau two qualities which most critics have denied him—originality and unity of thought (p. 141). He succeeds, I think, in showing that Boileau's interpretation of Longinus was original, and that there is no contradiction between it and the main body of Boileau's doctrine; in both, his chief concern was for the emotional impact of poetry, its power to "ravir un spectateur" and "entrainer tous les cœurs."[2] But it seems to me that Brody overemphasizes the subjectivity of Boileau's conception of the creative process, failing to give due weight to the objective and generalizing elements in his idea of *raison*. For Boileau, a great poet is something more than a "master illusionist" (p. 139); the truth of poetry is not purely aesthetic, as Brody seems to contend, for the *lustre* of art has its basis in some sort of correspondence be-

[2] *Épitre* VII, "À M. Racine," lines 2, 8; discussed by Brody, p. 120.

tween the literary representation and its model in reality. Brody's emphasis on the internal imperative still needs to be balanced by a more adequate recognition of other aspects of Boileau's thought, especially those so lucidly expounded by Lanson more than sixty years ago.[3] A definitive synthesis remains to be written.

Boileau and Longinus is the first book of a young scholar. It is a remarkable piece of work, as notable for its erudition as for its freshness of approach.

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LA GUERRA DI GAND, E ALTRE VARIETÀ STORICHE E LETTERARIE. Par Carlo Cordié. Florence: Felice Le Monnier, 1958. 222 p.

Reprendre d'anciens articles, leur faire subir une mise au point plus ou moins extensive, et les réunir en un recueil semble être une méthode chère à M. Carlo Cordié. Dans le cas présent, certains de ces articles remontent à 1930. Si l'auteur n'était pas déjà bien connu pour son infatigable ardeur d'érudit, de chercheur et de collectionneur de faits dans les sentiers moins battus de l'histoire littéraire, dans ce qu'on pourrait appeler les coulisses de la littérature proprement dite, le présent ouvrage suffirait à lui assurer cette renommée.

La question qui se pose toujours en pareil cas est celle de la valeur de ces savantes disquisitions sur des points d'importance nettement secondaire. A cet égard, les avis sont partagés: qui d'admirer cette précision méticuleuse dans le détail,[1] ce flair à dénicher la clef d'un mystère par d'ingénieuses associations, une mémoire et une persévérance sans égales; qui de mépriser ces jeux de prince au royaume de la pédanterie, et de déclarer que, si l'on veut s'en tenir à enfiler des perles, encore faudrait-il que ce soient de vraies perles. Quoi qu'il en soit, une fois le genre accepté, force est de reconnaître que la prose de M. Cordié se lit facilement: une sorte de bonne humeur rayonne sur l'ensemble; elle éclate, par endroits, en remarques ironiques ou sarcastiques qui égaient une matière en soi plutôt aride, l'allègent et la transforment en un aimable passe-temps. Et, parmi la masse écrasante et la marche implacable des petits faits impitoyablement accumulés, un éclair jaillit de temps à autre: l'explication des phénomènes relatés, les colorant d'une teinte intéressante et leur donnant un relief significatif.

Puisqu'il s'agit ici d'un travail d'érudition pure où se trouvent amoncelés en nombre extraordinaire et les faits et les noms (l'index des noms propres en compte plus de 700, chiffre étonnant pour un opuscule de 222 pages seulement), nous ne saurions faire mieux, nous semble-t-il, qu'indiquer brièvement le contenu des sept articles dont se compose le recueil. Nous pensons rendre ainsi service au lecteur:

[3] Gustave Lanson, *Boileau*, 2nd ed. (Paris, 1900), chaps. IV and V. See also A. O. Lovejoy, "'Nature' as Aesthetic Norm," *Essays in the History of Ideas* (Baltimore, 1948), pp. 69-77, a reference which Brody does not cite. He also makes no use of the important paper by Elder Olson, "The Argument of Longinus' *On the Sublime*," *MP*, XXXIX (1942), 225-258.

[1] Y a-t-il mérite quelconque à relever en les corrigeant expressément (voir par exemple, p. 172, n. 25, ou encore p. 215, n. 17) des erreurs typographiques que le lecteur rectifierait bien tout seul et qui sont sans importance aucune? Nous préférerions voir M. Cordié plus exigeant à l'égard de son propre texte.

un coup d'œil rapide suffira pour repérer la présence de tel ou tel sujet qui l'intéresse particulièrement.

I. *Momenti della storia del ducato di Borgogna.* Deux articles. Le premier—qui donne son titre au volume—a trait à la lutte de la ville de Gand contre les ducs de Bourgogne, geste des forces populaires contre les seigneurs féodaux telle que nous la narre dans ses *Mémoires* Olivier de la Marche.—Dans le second article, nous assistons avec Philippe le Bon, père de Charles le Téméraire, à un Jugement de Dieu à Valenciennes en 1455: la "honte" du duel à mort entre deux bourgeois est lavée par un duel selon les règles entre gentilshommes.

II. *Note al "Journal de voyage" del Montaigne.* Quatre articles. Notes, rectifications et réflexions à propos de ce Journal tenu par Montaigne se rendant aux bains de Lucques, et dont un tiers a été rédigé en italien par l'auteur même. Avec des remarques sur l'édition Dédéyan (1953).

III. *Avventure postume di Gil Blas di Santillana.* Il s'agit ici des "imitations" de Paul Féval (*Madame Gil Blas*, 1856; traduit en italien, 1857), Lorenzo da Ponte (quatre Chants en vers), Gil Perez, autrement dit Pietro Borseri (roman par lettres, 1819)—et enfin de Napoléon en tant que lecteur du célèbre roman.

IV. *Quartetto fuori programma.* La traduction italienne de La Bruyère par Paolino Lanati (1805) est dédiée à Moreau de Saint-Méry, administrateur des états de Parme et Plaisance, et celle de La Rochefoucauld par Giosafat Ristori (1818) au prince de Canosa, colonel aux armées du roi des Deux-Siciles. Moreau et Canosa: étrange compagnie en terre étrangère pour les deux grands moralistes français!

V. *L'abate Guillon de Montléon, polemista.* L'article— morceau principal du recueil dont il occupe le centre—est consacré aux vicissitudes de l'abbé Guillon, polygraphe enragé (poligrafo inquieto," p. 92), polémiste anti-napoléonien, critique sévère des *Sépulcres* de Foscolo, la "bestia francese" de Monti. Un Appendice de trente pages (en six sections) enrichit encore l'article de documents *ad hoc* et de renseignements supplémentaires sur cet obscur publiciste qui fut conservateur à la Mazarine après avoir connu les prisons de France et d'Italie.

VI. *La "Physiologie de la cravate," il barone de l'Empesé e l'ombra del Balzac.* Présentation détaillée des *Physiologie*... dont la mode sévit en France entre 1829 et 1842 environ. Il s'agit avant tout de Balzac, mais aussi d'auteurs secondaires tels que le baron de l'Empesé (un des nombreux pseudonymes de Marc de Saint-Hilaire) et Charles-Chabot. L'article est à la fois divertissant et instructif.

VII. *Storia e fantasia nel "Chevalier des Touches."* Confrontation des faits historiques avec les détails contenus dans le fameux roman de Barbey d'Aurevilly.

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ROMANTICISMO E CLASSICISMO NELL'OPERA DI VICTOR CHAUVET, E ALTRE RICERCHE DI STORIA LETTERARIA. Par Carlo Cordié. Florence: G. D'Anna, 1958. 403 p.

Si le nom de Chauvet survit dans les annales de l'histoire littéraire française, c'est qu'il intimement lié à celui de Manzoni. En 1820, Chauvet publiait dans le

Lycée Français un compte rendu du *Carmagnola* de Manzoni. Ces réflexions déterminèrent l'écrivain italien à répondre au critique français afin de défendre ses principes littéraires.[1] La *Lettre à M. C...* est justement célèbre. A la lire, on ne peut s'empêcher de penser aussitôt à la *Préface de Cromwell* dont elle paraît être, par endroits, comme une première ébauche. (Venue plus tard, elle en pourrait passer pour un démarcage!) A Chauvet revient l'honneur d'avoir provoqué l'apparition de ce document que l'époque déclarait être "ce qu'on a écrit de plus remarquable jusqu'ici sur le genre romantique et sur la grande question des unités dans la tragédie."[2]

Il serait injuste, toutefois, de réduire Chauvet au seul rôle d'instigateur. Son œuvre d'écrivain, quoique bref et relativement peu abondant, lui donne droit de cité parmi ceux qui maniaient la plume au cours des années où le romantisme français prenait forme graduellement et finit par triompher. Ainsi se justifie l'intérêt que lui porte M. Carlo Cordié.

Le présent ouvrage se compose de deux parties nettement distinctes. Seule la première est consacrée à Chauvet. A commencer par sa production poétique, qui s'étend sur une dizaine d'années—entre 1815 et 1825—et où l'on notera surtout un poème sur l'*Abolition de la Traite des Noirs*: cette pièce de concours obtint le prix de poésie de l'Académie Française pour 1823. Suivent trois chapitres qui exposent la pensée de Chauvet. Et tout d'abord son "idéalisme humanitaire." On y voit l'auteur prendre parti pour la liberté de la presse, la raison et le juste milieu, le régime constitutionnel (tel qu'il se trouve aux Etats-Unis); et d'autre part, se prononcer contre les Jésuites, s'intéresser à la réforme des rigueurs du bagne ("L'homme a-t-il le droit d'être plus sévère que Dieu?" p. 44), à la situation des nègres d'Afrique, à la question coloniale en général, à l'indépendance d'Haïti et de Saint-Domingue en particulier. Les deux chapitres suivants passent en revue les principes littéraires de Chauvet critique et collaborateur à la *Revue Encyclopédique* de 1825 à 1831. Dans l'ensemble, notre auteur est un classique, mais il l'est à sa manière. En effet, il est souvent romantique dans ses goûts: s'agit-il de tragédie, par exemple, ses préférences vont aux sujets modernes ou tout au moins tirés du moyen âge (p. 91). Il condamne, toutefois, le vague, que celui-ci soit romantique ou classique, peu importe! Il insiste sur la valeur d'un art basé sur la raison et l'harmonie. Devant les tendances romantiques contemporaines, il crie au casse-cou: "Des mains littéraires attentent chaque jour aux statues de nos grands poètes, et c'est un mal très-grave" (p. 116). La fécondité verbale d'un Victor Hugo l'inquiète également (p. 118). Mais ce qu'il redoute surtout—et à juste titre—c'est l'uniformité qui résulte de toute mode en littérature comme ailleurs: "Jamais parmi nos jeunes poètes il n'y eut plus de prétentions à l'originalité, et jamais il n'y eut moins de variété dans leur inspiration" (p. 105). Quant à lui, sa position lui paraît claire: "Je ne suis, grâce au ciel, ni classique ni romantique. Je fais partie de ce bon public qui estime les ouvrages en raison du plaisir qu'ils lui donnent sans s'inquiéter de la théorie des auteurs... Je crois pourtant qu'aussi bien que le monde de la matière, le monde de l'esprit a ses lois" (p. 109).

La méthode de M. Cordié dans ces deux chapitres est strictement chronologique:

[1] Ecrite en français et à Paris même où Manzoni se trouvait en 1821 précisément, la *Lettre* ne fut publiée qu'en 1823.—Sur toute cette question, on consultera avec profit Dorothée Christesco, *La Fortune de Manzoni en France* (Paris, 1943), chap. II, pp. 28-39.

[2] *Revue-Encyclopédique* citée par Christesco, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

les articles sont passés en revue dans l'ordre même où ils ont paru dans la *Revue Encyclopédique*, année par année. C'est là une méthode qui entraîne d'inévitables répétitions. En outre, la période examinée étant relativement brève—il s'agit de six années environ—il ne pouvait guère être question de faire voir un développement, une progression quelconque dans la pensée de l'auteur. Il y aurait eu avantage, donc—ne fût-ce que pour plus de clarté—à exposer les opinions de Chauvet en procédant de façon systématique et en groupant par sujets des déclarations disséminées dans divers articles et comptes rendus. Cela permettrait au lecteur de se faire une idée plus nette du mélange de vues que représente Chauvet, mélange qui, à notre avis, fait le véritable intérêt de ce publiciste plutôt obscur. Le personnage est de transition: héritier du siècle des lumières et moraliste dans la tradition des classiques, mais en même temps curieux de son siècle, s'intéressant aux questions sociales et politiques, impatient des erreurs classiques, condamnant aussi bien la variété des mètres, cause de distractions chez le lecteur, que la monotonie de l'alexandrin.

Les sentiments de Chauvet à l'égard de l'Italie et de ses écrivains font l'objet d'un dernier chapitre. Ici encore, l'ordre suivi est chronologique. Notons en passant que Chauvet possédait l'italien à fond; il connaissait le pays et s'intéressait vivement au sort de ses habitants: "Une liberté telle que la comportent les lieux et les temps est le seul remède aux maux qui affligent les peuples. L'Italie en a besoin; l'Italie en est digne; l'Italie un jour l'obtiendra" (p. 160). Le texte est de 1828!

Aux lecteurs curieux de vraiment connaître Chauvet, son milieu, son époque, il convient de signaler le fait que, concurremment au présent ouvrage, M. Cordié en publiait un autre[3] qui devrait se lire parallèlement: on y trouvera, en effet, dans leur texte intégral, les principaux articles de Chauvet, en particulier le compte rendu auquel la *Lettre* de Manzoni faisait réponse.

La seconde partie de *Romanticismo e classicismo*—de beaucoup la plus longue (pp. 165-384)—correspond aux "e altre ricerche di storia letteraria" du titre, tout en s'intitulant, dans le texte même, "Appunti e studi letterari." Ce sont là une dizaine d'essais que varient considérablement en longueur et en intérêt, et vont d'un habile dépistage sur la curieuse fortune internationale du nom de Démogorgon à une esquisse de la vie et des œuvres d'Augustine-Malvine-Blanchette, "ouvrière et poète," auteur d'un recueil *Rêves et Réalités* auquel Lamartine rendit hommage dans un poème lyrique de 1852, *Chanter et Prier*.[4]

Il serait injuste de refuser toute valeur aux savantes recherches de M. Cordié. Néanmoins, il faut reconnaître que ce sont là de ces *nugae* faites pour plaire avant tout aux chercheurs et curieux, aux amateurs de petits faits, à tous ceux qui trouvent un plaisir spécial à ce qui constitue à proprement parler la petite histoire littéraire. La question qui se pose, c'est dans quelle mesure les travaux de ce genre peuvent servir à enrichir notre connaissance et notre appréciation de la littérature en tant que forme d'art. C'est là, en somme, le résultat d'une sorte de mandarinisme qui paraît se répandre de plus en plus de nos jours. Aboutissement d'un intellectualisme poussé à outrance et, par suite, desséchant? seule ressource, les "grands" sujets étant épuisés? ou encore influence du rôle

[3] Victor Chauvet, *Manzoni-Stendhal-Hugo e altri saggi sui classici e romantici*, a cura di Carlo Cordié (Catania, 1958).

[4] Lamartine, *Vers oubliés*, publiés par Gustave Charlier dans le *Mercure de France*, CCCXI (janv.-avril 1951),5-7.—L'expression "ouvrière et poète" est de Lamartine.

de l'observation dans les sciences? Toujours est-il qu'il serait justifié, semble-t-il, de se demander si pareils travaux ne seraient pas davantage à leur place dans revues et journaux littéraires où pourraient les trouver ceux qu'ils divertissent (certains de ces travaux ne manquent pas d'être fort amusants) ou à qui ils pourraient être utiles. Au fait, l'ouvrage entier de M. Cordié se compose, ainsi que l'auteur nous en prévient dans son *Avertissement*, d'articles qui, à deux exceptions près, ont déjà paru, ou sont en train de paraître, ou encore sur le point de paraître. Cela est regrettable.[5] Et c'est peut-être là une des raisons de l'impression d'éparpillement que l'ouvrage nous laisse dans son ensemble. Il y a trop de détails, trop de faits isolés et présentés en quelque sorte à l'état brut, pas assez de ces vues générales et interprétations qui mettent en branle l'imagination du lecteur et sa sensibilité littéraire. Certes, nous admirons l'abeille qui butine, et louons sa diligence. A une condition toutefois: qu'elle nous donne, non pas des grains de pollen, si nombreux et précieux soient-ils, mais du miel.

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ENGLISCHE VORROMANTIK UND DEUTSCHER STURM UND DRANG. M. G. LEWIS' STELLUNG IN DER GESCHICHTE DER DEUTSCH-ENGLISCHEN LITERATURBEZIEHUNGEN. By Karl S. Guthke. Göttingen: Vanderhoeck und Ruprecht, 1958. 231 p. (Palaestra, Vol. CCXXIII.)

The question of the priority of the English or the German Gothic novel has been discussed since the time of Coleridge. A recent investigator (Bertrand Evans, *Gothic Drama from Walpole to Shelley*, Berkeley, 1947, pp. 123 f.) has said: "By 1789 in England the Gothic in fiction and drama had attained elaborate development but had scarcely begun to grow in Germany. On the whole Germany lagged by about ten years." There have been other critics who have been equally positive in assigning the priority to Germany. But the question has been pointless for lack of precise formulation. There are two distinct types of Gothic novels. There is the rationalistic Gothic, in which uncanny happenings serve to bring about the frustration of malevolence and the establishment of justice (*The Castle of Otranto*) or in which seemingly strange mysteries are shown to have a rational explanation (the novels of Anne Radcliffe). But there is another Gothic—the high and only true Gothic—which presupposes the existence of malevolent powers that seek to bring about the destruction of their human victims.

It is the prime merit of Guthke's monograph to have insisted on this distinction and to have drawn far-reaching conclusions from it. In Germany the *naturmagische* elements appear strongly in the ballads of Goethe and in Herder's collection, dating back to the first and best years of the Sturm und Drang period. They also appear in the novels of Naubert and in Naubert's and Musäus' collections of Volksmärchen. The earliest and most consistent introducer of these and similar German products to the English public was Mathew Gregory Lewis,

[5] Plus regrettables encore, voire déplorables, sont les innombrables erreurs typographiques qu'on relève dans cet ouvrage en apparence d'exécution soignée. On s'étonne qu'elles aient échappé à un savant aussi méticuleux que M. Cordié. (Elles sont si nombreuses que nous renonçons à les signaler.)

commonly known as Monk Lewis. It is therefore in order to explore and re-evaluate Lewis' total activity as a mediator between German and English literature; and this is the purpose of Guthke's monograph.

At the age of seventeen Lewis went to Weimar to study German literature at its fountainhead. During the course of a seven months' visit, July 1792 to February 1793, he acquired, apparently without effort, a near mastery of the German language and became acquainted with Wieland, Goethe, Herder, Schiller, and other literary men of the city. By dint of much reading he gained a critical appreciation of certain phases of German literature, and soon after his return to England was recognized as the chief authority in this field.

Among the fictional works which Lewis read in Weimar, or at least before writing *The Monk*, were Naubert's *Neue Volksmärchen der Deutschen* (containing "Ottbert," among other tales), Musäus' *Volksmärchen* (containing "Die Entführung"), Spiess' *Petermännchen*, Veit Weber's *Sagen der Vorzeit* (containing the tale "Teufelsbeschwörung"), Klinger's *Der Faust der Morgenländer*, and Schiller's *Der Geisterseher*.

In novels and tales such as these one could read of *Verführerinnen* with the face of a madonna and a heart possessed of a devil, who depraved pious monks and put them at the mercy of satanic powers. This *femme fatale* plays her destined role in Naubert's "Ottbert," in Klinger's *Der Faust der Morgenländer*, and in Veit Weber's *Sagen der Vorzeit*. The nightly apparition with lamp and dagger has its origin not vaguely in a folk tale, but specifically in Musäus' "Die Entführung."

One chapter of Guthke's book, dealing with Lewis' translation, entitled *Rolla or The Peruvian Hero*, of Kotzbue's play, *Die Spanier in Peru*, is somewhat marginal to the main theme of the monograph. Sheridan asked Lewis for a literal translation of Kotzebue's play to serve as a basis for the drama *Pizarro*, which he planned to produce at the Covent Garden Theater. The translation was far from literal and better than a literal one would have been. Guthke describes in detail and at length (eight pages) the nature of Lewis' deviations, classifying them and motivating them, and decides they are to the good. The demonstration is more than satisfying.

Another chapter deals with Lewis' translation, with important variations, of Klinger's *Der Faust der Morgenländer*. There is something clearly amiss with Klinger's narrative. Abdallah is filled with altruistic enthusiasm and follows the dictates of his heart, but is thwarted constantly by his self-seeking beneficiaries, and his plans lead only to disastrous results. A spirit warns him of the results of such planning and persuades him to follow the dictates of reason; but he again ends in disaster. The illogical lesson that Klinger seeks to impart is that one should follow the "Trieb des Herzens." In his adaptation, *The Spirit of the Frozen Ocean: An Oriental Romance* (1808), Lewis draws the logical conclusion, one in accordance with his own view, that there is a fatality in worldly affairs that sees to it that man is ever thwarted. He makes one other characteristic change. The spirit-adviser of Abdallah was a young man. Lewis substitutes a female being, "schön, kalt und verderblich."

Lewis' *Romantic Tales* appeared in 1808, containing, as its first offering, "Mistrust; or Blanche and Osbright; a Feudal Romance." In 1945 L. F. Peck identified this as an adaptation of Kleist's first tragedy, *Die Familie Schroffenstein*. In one of his tightly compacted sentences Guthke plausibly surmises "daß Lewis durch C. M. Wielands Sohn Ludwig, der 1802 mit Zschokke und Kleist in Bern

zusammen war, der Kleist veranlaßte "Die Familie Ghonorez" aus dem spanischen Milieu ins mittelalterliche Schwaben zu verlegen, und der vermutlich auch die anonyme Ausgabe besorgte, von Kleists Erstling Kenntnis erhalten hat, zumal eine englische Übersetzung erst lange nach Lewis' Tod erschien."

Guthke submits narrative and tragedy to a careful comparison of passages, in the course of which Lewis' somewhat banal prose makes a shabby showing against Kleist's sturdy, succinct verse.

Regarding two of Guthke's conclusions I am inclined to reserve judgment. It seems to me that the compact of inheritance is as central in *Die Familie Schroffenstein* as it is in Lewis' adaptation. In a narrative the author may return from time to time to stress the importance of an element. In a drama the note should be sounded early, once for all, and definitely. Kleist could hardly state the importance of the contract more emphatically. The Kirchenvogt begins to talk of the "Erbvertrag" (I, 1):

> "Jeronimus: Zur Sache, Alter! Das gehört zur Sache nicht.
> Kirchenvogt: Ei, Herr, der Erbvertrag gehört zur Sache.
> Denn das ist just, als sagetest du, der Apfel
> Gehöre nicht zum Sündenfall."

Nor do I see that Kleist lays less stress upon distrust than Lewis. Or perhaps Guthke's example is merely ill chosen. He quotes the lines from Lewis: "Of all the defects of the human heart, there is none more encroaching, more insidious, more dangerous, than mistrust; viewed through her distorted optics, there is no action so innocent, that does not assume the appearance of evil." As a parallel one could quote the lines of Sylvester (I, 2):

> "Das Mistraun ist die schwarze Sucht der Seele,
> Und alles, alles, auch das Schuldlos-Reine, zieht
> Fürs kranke Aug die Tracht der Hölle an.
> Das Nichtsbedeutende, Gemeine, ganz
> Alltägliche, spitzfindig, wie zerstreute
> Zwirnfaden, wird's zu einem Bild geknüpft,
> Das uns mit gräßlichen Gestalten schreckt."

Two chapters dealing with Goethe and Herder are central to Guthke's theme. When Lewis began to concern himself with these writers, Herder was quite unknown to the English public and Goethe was known only as the author of *The Sufferings of Werther*. The point of high significance is that Lewis preferred for translation *naturmagische* ballads, that he translated nearly all that were accessible to him, and that he translated little else. His subjects included "Der Fischer" and "Der Erlkönig" from Goethe, and from Herder's collection "Erl-Königs Tochter," "Elvershöh," and "Der Wassermann." He also translated the ballads, "Die kranke Braut," "Das Lied vom Herrn von Falkenstein," and "Ulrich und Annchen," which Guthke here first connects with Lewis' adaptation, "Bertrand and Mary Belle." On the basis of these works Lewis wrote several good poems, following the original closely when he wished to do so. What he failed to render was the irregularity of the lines and the lack of sequence, the "Sprünge," of the originals, features characteristic of the folk ballad.

It is clear that this phase of Lewis' activity was the one most fruitful of results. In the wake of these translations there followed such poetic works as Words-

worth's *The Borderers*, Shelley's *The Cenci*, Keats's *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, and Byron's *Manfred*. The reader can easily add other titles to the list—some lyrical ballads of Wordsworth and Coleridge, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner," "The Idiot Boy," "Peter Bell," and such later German counterparts as "Die beschränkte Frau" of Annette von Droste-Hülshoff and her ballad, "Der spiritus familiaris des Roßtaüschers."

A substantial chapter on Schiller opens with a discussion of Lewis' translation of *Kabale und Liebe* under the title *The Minister*. Guthke finds that the translation has such merits that one should overlook Lewis' inability to supply equivalents for the language of the "Polterer" Miller or of the snobbish Kanzler Wurm. He then propounds the essential question: What was there in *Kabale und Liebe* to attract the interest of Lewis? He finds the answer in Ferdinand's "Tauschung" and in the "tragische Irreführung des Menschen durch eine wiedersinnige Schicksalsgewalt."

Critics have stressed the relationship of Schiller's *Die Räuber* to Lewis' works. It has been asserted from time to time that Lewis once wrote a translation of the tragedy. Guthke points out that there is no evidence for this. Again critics have, without good reason, asserted that Lewis' romantic drama, *Adelmorn the Outlaw*, belongs to the "Räubernachfolge" in England. There are, however, in Lewis' successful drama, *The Castle Spectre*, traces of *Die Räuber*. In particular, Osmond suffers a dream vision comparable to Franz's.

But more important is Lewis' utilization of the theme of the Wandering Jew, as presented in Schiller's *Der Geisterseher*. Before the appearance of *The Monk* this Jew had in England been a subject for comic treatment. After Schiller and Lewis the Wandering Jew became a literary symbol of the misery of humanity.

The contents of the chapters on Musäus and Naubert have been indicated above, with special reference to their collections of Volksmärchen. Guthke would not assert that Lewis' translation of Naubert's *Elisabeth Erbin von Toggenburg* is an important element in his relation to the German Sturm und Drang. Several pages (pp. 189-196) are devoted to a comparison of the prose of the original with that of the translation.

Chapter XII discusses the relation of Lewis' *The Bravo of Venice, A Romance Translated from the German* (1804) to its original, which Philip Allen in 1902 identified as Johann Heinrich Zschokke's drama, *Abellino* (1795). In his preface, Lewis states that he borrowed his subject matter from a German novel. Guthke solves this apparent contradiction—Zschokke wrote not only the drama but also a little-known novel, *Abällino der große Bandit* (1795), which Guthke shows to have been Lewis' direct source.

In general Guthke speaks well of Lewis' translations and paraphrases of German texts. If, however, one should give oneself the pain of reading in sequence the many *Stilproben* which appear throughout the monograph, one would hardly, on this evidence, accord to Lewis a high rank as an English master of prose. The few examples of his verse translations, on the other hand, are pleasing.

Because it maps a main literary stream and provides many new points of identification, and because it eliminates several falsely placed landmarks, Guthke's work is an important contribution to literary history. Moreover, it restores his proper stature to a sometimes much-disparaged man of letters.

The diction of the monograph is erudite, the style magisterial and periodic. A breathless sentence on page 95 runs for nine lines unrelieved even by a semicolon.

The printing of the book is attractive and the proofreading good—only four errors were noted in passing. We greet *Palaestra* on its return after a long absence.

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WITNESS OF DECEIT, GERHART HAUPTMANN AS CRITIC OF SOCIETY. By Leroy R. Shaw. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1958. 126 p. (University of California Publications in Modern Philology, Vol. L.)

This study attributes the early success of Gerhart Hauptmann's "naturalistic" dramas to their reflection of current social criticism. While not denying the importance of Hauptmann's style, the author is mainly concerned with the poet's attempts to reform society by calling attention to the lies upon which contemporary culture was based. Extensive parallels are cited between the now-forgotten work of the popular journalist, Max Nordau, and Hauptmann's earliest plays. While there is no proof of Hauptmann's acquaintance with Nordau, many of the theses contained in *Die conventionellen Lügen der Kulturmenschheit* were so generally accepted among the late nineteenth-century intelligentsia that their reflection in such dramas as *Vor Sonnenaufgang, Einsame Menschen,* and *Die Weber* led to their almost immediate approbation.

Mr. Shaw traces the development of this attack upon deceit from the still unpublished *Germanen und Römer* through *Die Weber,* and then goes on to compare Hauptmann's new attitude of renunciation, his "acceptance of evil and the certainty that it has no real effect on the human heart," with the outlook of the old weaver, Hilse. The shift from tragedy to comedy (or Märchen) is symbolic of this new view of life which lasted until the composition of *Die versunkene Glocke,* when Hauptmann abandoned the idea that cultural conditions are the chief cause of the human predicament.

The theme of the study is an interesting one and certainly worth its generally careful scholarship. It is disconcerting, however, and unnecessary in a work presumably intended chiefly for experts, to find most of the quotations in English translation, particularly such inept ones as, for example: "lasting, years-long sickness" on p. 11. (The original for this, incidentally, is on p. 41, not p. 38, of the *Germanic Review,* V, 1930.) While the term Märchen accurately defines *Hanneles Himmelfahrt,* "modern fairy tale" (p. 72) is a misnomer. Such small matters, however, do not seriously mar an otherwise solid study.

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